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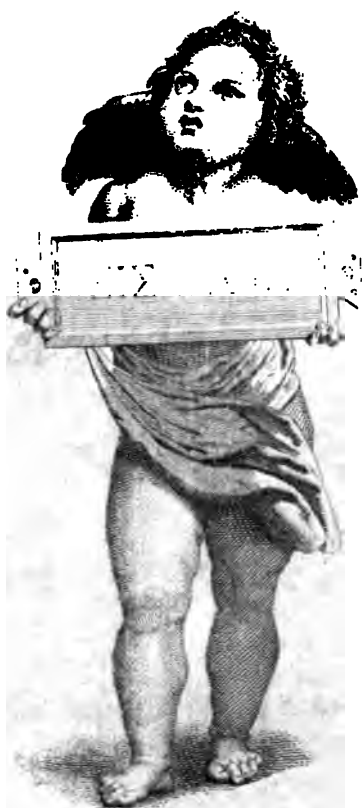
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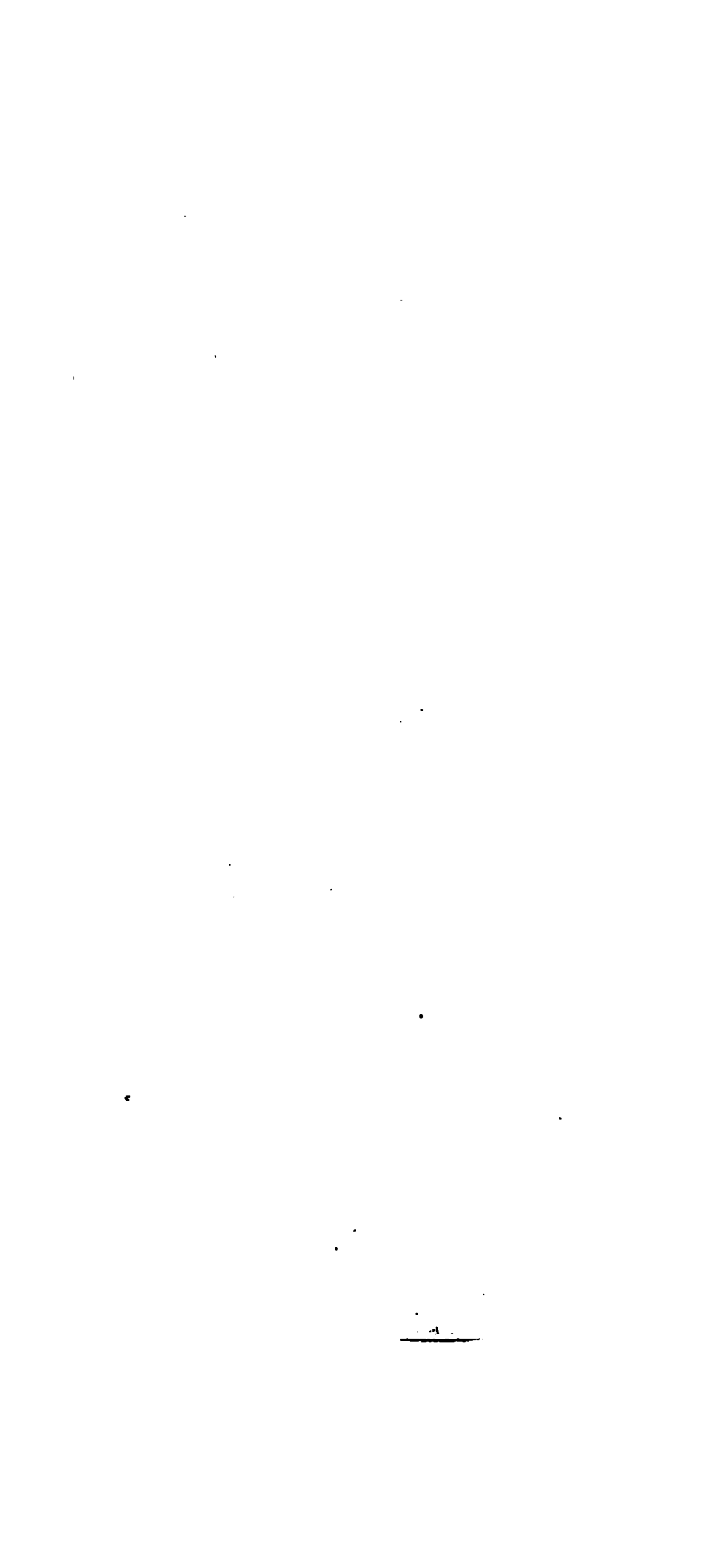
George Bancroft







ILLUSTRATIONS
OF THE
ORIGIN AND PROGRESS
OF THE
PASSIONS.



HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS
OF THE
ORIGIN AND PROGRESS
OF THE
PASSIONS,
AND THEIR
INFLUENCE ON THE CONDUCT OF MANKIND;
WITH
SOME SUBORDINATE SKETCHES
OF
HUMAN NATURE AND HUMAN LIFE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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CHAPTER I.

IS IT LAWFUL TO COMMIT SUICIDE?

THE sublunary state of mankind is inseparable from trial and sorrow. If pleasures intermingle with life, if terms of health and vigour be assigned, and courage speed to successful enterprize; if sometimes cheerful and void of care, we be content and happy,—the flowers which strew the path conceal the thorns, the intervals of enjoyment are short and fleeting. Melancholy, sickness, pain, and disappointment, hover in their train. The fire of youth is hourly refrigerating with advancing age, the senses cease to exaggerate delight, ardour no longer

stimulates,—we bend under a load of years. Nature is preparing to hasten us away.

Meantime, amidst the numberless disasters ever ready to darken our brightest fortunes, amidst the lengthened catalogue of subordinate woes, or the intolerable afflictions which urge on mortals, it will not seem strange that their pressure threatens our fall, or spite of the resistance reared to meet them that our weakness shall be overborne.

Those who discourse of fortitude, inculcate patience and resignation, or console the distressed with the hope of better prospects, are kind and generous: they would fondly preserve their mental empire, and quell the perturbations of the soul. But had they felt what they only figure, had the wounds which pierce the heart of sensibility rent their own, did they behold endless storms and convulsions awaiting them, would not they discover that fortitude has its bounds, that grief may exceed comfort, that misery and terror may border on the confines of death?

The conflict grows more and more unequal: As the gloom thickens, and the weight is bearing down, the victim of sorrow, sunk in despair, deaf to persuasion, at length reaches that awful moment, when, in premature contemplation of futurity, he resolves to abridge the evils of life, and, impatient of remaining for dissolution by the hand of nature, becomes his own destroyer.

Yet, shall it be allowed that under any worldly circumstances, that while yielding beneath adver-

sity, while racked by mental or corporeal anguish, or by trampling on our peaceful virtues we behold the flagitious glory in their corruption, shall it be allowed that we may raise a hostile arm against ourselves? Ought we not rather more earnestly to invoke that most precious gift of heaven fortitude, to sustain us while the evil is passing away, or bow our heads in silence before the will of Omnipotence?

Man is master of his own life, it is true: little is required to bring it to a close: a few moments of voluntary restraint, the slightest violence, and it ceases for ever. But although the vital spark be so feeble that it scarcely glows, so fleeting and elusory that scarcely can it be retained, it is daring to affirm that it may be extinguished of our own accord. All is not lawful which is within our power. It is not of our desire and inclination that we have visited the world: we are precluded from declaring the precise part which we occupy in the great scale of being; nay, it is not absolutely known to us whether our presence be not of some avail, though not immediately for ourselves. These are mysteries, veiled as yet from mankind: we view a portion—a small one—of the universe:—What are the immensities concealed and inscrutable!

Nevertheless, shall any one be compelled to live who is doomed to suffer; to whom all is dismal, dark, and dreary; who sees no termination of his misery, and who only desires to withdraw from it

in quest of a happier state, or to rejoin those beloved objects whom fate has reft from his embraces?

Our own comforts, our expectations, the love of doing good, and affection for those endeared to us, are our attachments to the world. Nature bids her creatures rejoice through all their liabilities to affliction. She binds us down to the performance of duties which may not be lawfully abandoned, for their abandonment induces injury. But while she is providing for one portion of her children, the other knows, from sad experience, that "an evil life, one intolerable, a life worse than death, is not the same as a good life, a happy life, one, at least, that may be endured, and is better than death."* For of what advantage are the productions of the earth, if we cannot derive our sustenance from them; or is any law beneficial which cannot be obeyed? Light cannot go in crooked lines, it cannot penetrate the depths of the dungeon: the tyrant despises the name of justice: Our groans in sickness are a weariness to others, we seem useless to society, useless to ourselves. That existence is hardly our own of which he who is our master can, the next moment, bereave us. Shall we never sleep because of an eternal watch to prevent our shipwreck? Must we live amidst storms and perils, and waste our fleeting years in despair, or is it better to die? "Who ever feared after there was no hope: or who would,

* *Robeck de Morte Voluntaria*, p. 35.

therefore, forbear to kill himself that another might do so? Unless, indeed, another's hand is easier than his own—a private death more disgraceful than a public one—or it is greater suffering for a man to fall on his own sword, covering the wound with his body, and so to perish quickly, than to protract the torment, bend his knee, and stretch forth his neck—perchance to many blows.”*

Suicide neither betokens the want of courage, the want of religion, nor the aberration of reason. The brave and the pious have been alike self-destroyers; and it is deliberately done. It is the survivors who question the lawfulness of suicide; not its perpetrators, for they are obeying themselves. Their common abhorrence of the deed persuades them that insanity is the agent, or impiety or pusillanimity under misfortune. But although bereft of judgment, the maniac more readily lifts his hand against his neighbour than against himself: the pious does not cast off his allegiance to God in resolving to die; nor if the brave shew their contempt of what terrifies all others, may we depreciate their courage. We seek comfort, we avoid danger, we desire ease or inaction. The same inducements, in another form, teach mankind to encounter a lesser evil to shun what they deem a greater; so that, setting the disorders of uncontrollable passion aside, perhaps it is this which those unhappy persons resorting to

* *Pacatus Panegyricus Theodosii*, p. 32.

self-destruction chiefly have in view. The history of the human race proves it to be the common motive: it is the estimate of joy and sorrow, and computations of the scale of misery. Almost every people, and every age, have admitted the expediency of suicide under certain circumstances: but it is not admitted by the laws of nature: all her contrivances are to enable the living to retain life: her dictates enforce the necessity for self-preservation: its principle is implanted the strongest of any in the mind: it has a watchfulness which never sleeps: it chains us to the love of existence; every thing besides is a minor sacrifice: "Yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life." The horror of destruction is born with animation. Besides, there is such a manifest inconsistency in aggravating pain by those who already suffer, of courting death instead of hoping for relief by outliving the distress, that reflecting men, as well as the meek and patient who meet calamity with resignation, will always reprobate suicide. Hence, notwithstanding its expediency has been repeatedly instilled, and its perpetration defended or tolerated as unproductive of evident evils, and although dissertations have attempted to prove that "*Self-homicide is not so naturally sin, that it may never be otherwise*,"* it has nowhere received universal approbation.

* *Donne, Bampton, 1648, in 4.*

But what has been more keenly contested than, whether mankind may deprive themselves of existence without reproach? It appears as if the results of volition are to be disputed, as if the line grows narrower, and the shades between right and wrong become more imperceptible as the subject is discussed. When we see the greatest philosophers of antiquity, such as Plato and Aristotle, together with Pliny, Seneca, and Antoninus, ranging their opinions alternately, or on opposite sides—and when a whole host of the most liberal and enlightened men of modern æras follow in their footsteps—it would be presumptuous to pronounce a hasty decision in approval or reprobation.

But it may not be void of utility to trace the apparent inducements of suicide to their proper source; for if self-destruction be contrary to the principles of nature, or a wrong in social life, their true and forcible exposure will tell us where the evil lurks. A beacon may rise on the fate of the unfortunate, to warn their fellows of the hidden rocks whereon they have perished.

The love of life is great: it is that of all possessions with which we are most unwilling to part: we grasp it as the firmest tenure; nay, amidst disease, affliction, and the growing infirmities of age, it is reluctantly surrendered. Masters of ourselves, we would hold by life for ever; yet a simple fit of impatient passion will hurry its victim into eternity.

Some of the ancient sages, whose precepts are

profoundly venerated, endeavour to illustrate the benefits of suicide, and to encourage its practice: pain incurable, constant adversity, a state of misery, bids us begone; yet certain secret sensations annexed to our vital being, inspire repugnance to obey. We recoil instinctively from the uplifted arm: an internal monitor whispers that it may be a trespass in regard to ourselves. Those of mankind retaining self-command, who do not permit intemperance to sway their reason, will first investigate the precise condition in which they stand: and next, the questions concomitant on every suicide. The kind, the extent, and the permanence of their affliction, the consequences of withdrawing from it, the feelings of their friends and families, the public sentiments, and the effect of such a measure on their posthumous fame, will not be the lowest of their considerations. Because it will first be asked, could not fortitude have taught endurance somewhat longer? Who can presumptuously arrogate the knowledge of futurity, seeing evil is often productive of good?—Ought not man to humble himself in resignation to the divine pleasure; and although the evil be great, to wait in patience for its cure?—Or, was it not glorious to despise death, perhaps in the defence of wounded honour, or for patriotism,—to fly from pain, and each to precipitate his own catastrophe?

It is recorded, that Pythagoras deemed it unlawful to depart from life without being commanded by the Governor of the universe. Plato holds, that

we are to consider ourselves as situated in a certain prison, secured by a guard, from which it is not proper we should attempt to free ourselves and escape.* Aristotle maintains, that voluntary death for the purpose of evading poverty, on account of love, or to shun sickness, is more the act of timidity than of courage: for effeminacy avoids what is painful or distressing; neither is destruction sought because it is honourable, but as a refuge from evil. Further, that he who destroys himself in wrath, acts contrary to the dictates of the law, therefore his deed cannot be sanctioned.† Socrates also is said to have refused the counsel of his friends to defeat his unjust sentence by suicide.—“Here do I await my fate!” exclaimed the unfortunate Darius. “Perhaps you wonder that I do not terminate my life. But, let me die by the crime of another rather than my own.”‡ These are great authorities, instilling manly, pious, and rational sentiments of constancy and submission to the universal dispensations.

On the other hand, shall not our resolution waver on hearing Seneca eloquently plead, that a man is not to live as long as he can, but only so long as is

* *Plato* in *Phædone*:

† *Aristotle* *Ethici*, lib. iii. cap. 11. lib. v. cap. 15.

‡ *Quintus Curtius*, lib. v. cap. 12. The barbarians usurping the government of France in the year 1792, ordered their unhappy sovereign to be deprived of his razors and penknife. When they were demanded from him he asked, “Do you think me such a coward as to kill myself?” *Moore*, *Journal*, vol. ii. p. 449.

suitable. "You ask of me," he says, "what is the way to freedom. Veins are in your body—the way may be opened with a knife: a point can gain your safety. Behold that precipice, it leads to liberty: Behold the sea, that river, that well, liberty resides below."* Does not Cicero conclude, that "death withdraws us from evil, not from good?"† And in the estimation of Pliny, who profoundly views the deprivation of existence, "of all the benefits which nature confers on man, none surpasses sudden death; and it is the more precious, that every one has it within his reach."‡ According to the calm and contemplative Antoninus also, a wise man should know whether it is time for him to quit the world or not.§ Many other names could be added to this enumeration of the illustrious, sufficient to shake our firmest opinions, were they grounded on the opinions of others.

The lawfulness of suicide, under certain circumstances, was admitted and reduced within the axioms of some of the philosophical systems cultivated among the ancients. To undervalue comforts or pleasures, remaining undisturbed by pain or misfortune, the contempt of misery and death, were exalted as the highest qualities adorning mankind. The Stoics enforced the benefit of self-controul, and of volun-

* *Seneca de Ira*, lib. iii. cap. 15. *Epistola* 70.

† *Cicero Tuscul. Quest.* lib. i. § 34.

‡ *Pliny Historia Naturalis*, lib. xviii. § 2.

§ *Antoninus Meditationes*, lib. iii. § 1.

tary privation, as necessary ingredients in preparing the mind for extremities, and for confirming human felicity: they disclaimed the influence of the passions in suicide, on account of incurable disease, or personal mutilations, if resorted to in the cause of the country, for the sake of friends, or for excessive mental distress. Then it was a legitimate deed.* But who does not see that in giving their sanction to suicide, the Stoics were at the same time providing an effectual antidote in the deliberation which had necessarily to precede its commission? They taught the absolute subjugation of all the mental emotions indeed, that placidity is the best preserver of peace: but their maxims encouraged many suicides, where the hand would have otherwise wavered in their perpetration. It was not held an act which was accompanied by shame, or to be visited by reproach on the memory of the guilty. Yet experience proves that the most numerous class of self-destroyers is not found among their disciples, that suicide is rarely contemplated by those who have studied their precepts and becoming accomplished in their practice, retain an empire over themselves. It is the fact, not the cause, which is the subject of deep meditation: it is the result of some long harboured resolve, of some sudden gust or ungovernable passion, which time would have moderated in coolly weighing the motives. Along with his creation, the desire of survivance originates in man.

* *Diogenes Laertius* in *vita Zenonis*, § 13.

Thus among the ancients suicide was so far from being deemed a censurable action, that many instilled its profits, and gave it public approbation. Nor has it wanted modern advocates; and if pious, wise, and prudent persons have called it wrong, others who pleaded most strenuously in its favour have sealed their arguments with self-destruction.*

* A noted example is seen in the fate of *Robeck*, perhaps the most able advocate for suicide who has ever written, though his work be not in a style to move the passions. Robeck was born of respectable parentage at Calmar, a Swedish town on the Baltic, in the year 1672, and studied at the university of Upsal. Endowed with a vigorous natural genius, full of ardent expectations, and impatient of attaining his objects, he forsook his own country in disgust for the want of patronage, and in 1705 became a priest of the order of Jesuits in Vienna. He resided a long time there and in Italy, but tiring of the duties of his office, he endeavoured to obtain permission to return home, in which being disappointed, he went to Rinteln, Ham-burgh, and Bremen, about the year 1734. He then wrote to a Professor of the university in the first of these towns, that he was approaching the age of 64: that he felt his strength daily declining, and his mind overwhelmed with melancholy: he was about to depart on a journey, he said, which he apprehended would be his last. He desired that his manuscripts might be published, and his books given to the university. Soon afterwards dressing himself neatly, he entered a yawl alone, and in a short time his body was cast up by the waters within a few miles of Bremen. Robeck shows himself well acquainted with Scripture, and other ancient history. He pleads with great energy in favour of suicide, maintaining that what is unlawful at one time may become lawful at another: that suicide resulting from necessity may be relief; and although man may be put like a soldier to keep his station, it is

There are few who have lived any time in the world at the present day, who cannot number one or more self-destroyers within their own immediate knowledge: there are few who can penetrate into ancient or modern history, without beholding a multitude rising in fearful array before them. We deplore the fatal act whereby they have robbed themselves of existence: we wonder how they have been forsaken by self-command, and led so far astray: that they have brought distress on their kindred, and reproach on their name. But probing more deeply into the source of such catastrophes, perhaps we should rather incline to palliate their precipitation, or convert our censure to pity.

If mankind permit the passions of the mind to take the helm instead of reason, and try to guide their mortal course, surely some one more unruly than the rest, or less tempered by controul, may carry them like a false pilot to shipwreck on the rocks of suicide.

On retracing all the causes of this fatal act, they are seen to originate in the unconquerable influence of some baneful prepossession alienating its agent from himself. For whether he rages in madness,

inconsistent with the equity and wisdom of the Deity, that he should desire him to remain when existence becomes useless. His work, now rare, is accompanied by elaborate notes, wherein it is singular the editor endeavours to combat almost all the opinions advanced in the text. It appears under the title "*De Morte Voluntaria Philosophorum et bonorum virorum etiam Judæorum et Christianorum*," *Rintelii*, 1736, in 4.

or droops in melancholy, he is no longer under self-controul which keeps his safety, but yields to that which prompts his ruin.

Yet in ascertaining the real source of suicide, let us beware of rash conclusions; for sometimes as certain stages of the passions themselves exhibit a complication of features, so does it appear under many aspects which seem ready to confound and mislead the spectator. Self-destruction likewise ensues under that condition where all the passions most prone to disturb human tranquillity seem quiescent, save impatience only to hasten away. *

More than one catastrophe of this description has fallen within the notice of the author of these pages; by which it is to be understood that he was either intimately acquainted with the suicides themselves, or familiar with their name and character. But he must own in sincerity, that few were referable to reasons which, in so far as he could ascertain, should have led to such a horrid alternative, although illustrative of the great diversity of operating causes. With a single exception all were of

* *Spiess*, Biography of Suicides.—Has this author founded his work on well-established facts, or does he wander into the regions of imagination? Of forty-nine persons falling by suicide, sixteen committed it from love; six from indigence; three from ambition; two from monastic causes; six from love and shame; from the dread of disgrace; from an affront; from fanaticism; the fear of death; softness of disposition; melancholy; and nine from various reasons.

men, to almost the whole of whom a lot far more comfortable had fallen than is assigned to the great majority of the human race. There seemed to be little for them to desire. Three enjoyed ample fortunes, and dwelt in the bosom of their families in apparent content and felicity. Of these, one was supposed to be tinctured with insanity; another, from being an infidel, had occasional abstractions of religious gloom, but the reason of neither was affected at the moment; the third held a distinguished official situation, from which he derived constant occupation: a fourth suicide had a predisposition to melancholy: a fifth terminated his life, from the dread of indigence, affording a cruel example of neglected talents: a sixth, an officer in the army of penurious habits, was probably under a similar apprehension: and a seventh, a person in humble life, seems without the reality to have been affected in the same manner. Of two brothers, one died thus from a sudden mercantile embarrassment; the other, unless from melancholy, without any obvious inducement: the same fate was ascribed to their father, a very acute and intelligent man: a third brother attempted it; and an uncle, though not by the father's side, had been likewise a self-destroyer. The female sacrificed herself on account of domestic infelicity. Perhaps the intellects of some of these suicides may have been slightly affected; but the real occasion of others it may be was simply weariness of life. Three were somewhat advanced in years.

But does the suicide of the sane ever originate unless from sorrow? Can those be held to be masters of themselves, whom passion or prejudice so much alienates, that they are ready to rush into eternity?

These questions cannot be discussed at present; nor can a regular series of suicides be adduced, in order to illustrate the passions, or the passions be arranged for the illustration of suicide. It would engross a history of all the generations of the human race. But examples of suicide from the whole series and combination of the stronger passions of the mind, as resolving into one final incentive, certainly could be quoted; showing them to be more numerous according as the vehemence of some particular passion seizes the faster on mankind.

The same reasoning, however, regarding the evolution of the passions, is inapplicable here; for there a regular determinate progress of nature is fulfilling a great object; whereas self-destruction is overturning the laws which she so forcibly lays down in favour of self-preservation.

§ 1. *Suicide from Tedium Vitæ*.—Many reputable authorities have sought one main source of suicide in climate, and particularly in that of Britain, where this catastrophe is believed to be more common than in any part of the globe. Doubtless if darkness sinks the soul, for then is living nature stilled, a dense or dull and humid atmosphere in

depress the mind with frequent gloom, which generating melancholy, terminates at length in self-destruction. Are the same sensations inspired by the blue ethereal regions and the cloudless summer's sun, by the odour of the budding blossom, the green enamelled mead, and the gay carols of the fluttering tenants of the grove, as those imparted from the barren waste, the lurid heavens, and the gathering storm which frowns amidst the sullen grandeur of nature? Do not the elements themselves deeply affect the corporeal frame, as well as the mental system, cheering us by their benignant influence, sustaining our vigour, or abating our energies? There are seasons of apathy and seasons of ardour, just as the animated creation seems to sport by common action, from principles entirely hidden, and for which we cannot account. Nay, in the course of a single day we undergo so great an alteration in external impressions and internal faculties, that it seems as if we were not the same beings. Hence may it be concluded, that merely the effects of climate, without any reasons of obvious disgust, shall generate melancholy, conducting to a *tædium vitæ*, that weariness of existence which renders it intolerable to live, induces mankind to long for its termination, and urges them to suicide.

The *tædium vitæ* is no more an imaginary malady, than that ardent love of our natal soil under which we pine when home is unattainable. Yet it is not to be attributed entirely to climate. The

inhabitants of other countries, indeed, overspread by a grosser atmosphere above, and moistened by perpetual fogs below, in North Eastern Asia, and the Kurile islands, persons of mild and complacent manners, are prone to suicide.* But some of the Northern tribes are invariably cheerful, and among them it is not said to be common.† The *tædium vitæ* is not imaginary. A thousand times have not almost all been sensible of it in its lowest degrees: and however much our difficulties are aggravated in reaching the actual cause of self-destruction, this has been admitted as one by the most civilized and intelligent nations. After being acknowledged by the earlier philosophers, and the subject of a law by Antoninus in the second century, an enactment of the Romans of the sixth provides, that if any person not under a criminal accusation shall commit suicide from sickness of body, *tædium vitæ*, from insanity, or by accident, his testament shall remain in full force, or leaving none his property shall descend to his natural heirs.‡ Suicide had previously be-

* *Golownin*, Recollections of Japan, vol. i. p. 5. "In the summer months the fog lasts three or four days without interruption;" and "though the weather is more constant in winter yet a week seldom passes without two or three gloomy days"

† *Kotzebue*, Voyage of Discovery, vol. i. p. 254. "The Tokotzkoi and Americans whom we saw, were distinguished from all the Northern people by their invariable cheerfulness."

‡ *Codex*, lib. ix. tit. 50. § 1. *De bonis eorum qui morte consciverunt.*

come so common, that the property of those resorting to it under such circumstances was confiscated.

But whence does so unnatural a state as the *tædium vitæ* originate? It is the obvious will of Nature herself, that all animated creatures should be powerfully affected by the desire of self-preservation. It is essential for the fulfilment of some of the grand purposes of creation, judging the design by the subsistence, the chain that has been begun is to be continued in replenishment of the earth; and excepting this it may be asked, what are the other absolute commands of nature? She neither bids us till nor sow; nor are we told to pluck the fruit otherwise than by an internal sensation. Were life totally indifferent, were we always regardless of safety by plunging amidst peril, along with ourselves our race might perish, and the ends of existence be thus disappointed. It cannot be said in general that a needless waste of life is permitted, though the conservative provisions be apparently directed more in favour of the kind than its individuals, though imminent hazards threaten, and susceptibility exposes to destruction. Therefore is a paramount law, an original instinct, implanted in the breast and unfolded with the perception of external objects, teaching self-preservation. But our incessant attention to it may be interrupted, our love of life itself may be weakened as our warmer interests in worldly matters fade. Mental energies are wisely devised as the chief in-

struments of human happiness. We are well content when the imagination roves, or deep speculations engage the mind in enquiry. The necessities of man awaken the powers of contrivance: he is never allowed to rest. It is when our hopes are full, our pursuits interesting, and as our prospects flourish, that we are captivated with the possession of life, and greedy of its protracted tenure. But we may become regardless of it: our confidence in holding it may lessen as we discover how precarious, uncertain, and futile, are all endeavours for its preservation after the doom has been decreed. When flattery no longer gilds the joyous scenes of delusive fancy, and the warmth of that genial sun which we thought would ever beam goes down, our attachments loosen from the world and its attractions. Dull, cheerless, and forlorn, our pleasures and our cares sink into indifference; no renewed affections are kindling the dying embers to awaken us again to enjoyment. We are gradually weaned from existence, we sicken of life, and at last resolve to hurry from it.

By an imperceptible progression, therefore, the law of nature instilling into her children the utmost solicitude regarding the preservation of existence, may come at length to be despised or obliterated.

The contempt of life, indeed, in times of danger, or when dire necessity called for its surrender, has never been held a vice. On the contrary, as fortitude is the triumph of virtue, so has this final tes-

timony in the good been the admiration of its witnesses. But that fool hardiness, that readiness to encounter peril, which does not acknowledge fear under any circumstances, that eagerness to part with existence on trifling or even on serious disgusts, is not to be rated as a grand display of courage. It rather seems an incapacity of duly appreciating the actual condition in which we stand, or an impatience to be removed from it.

Although the enterprizing find activity the principal ingredient of their happiness, and the best direction to human welfare, it is doubtful whether, except in providing for his necessities, energetic action belongs to uneducated man. Certain of the ruder tribes repose their felicity in indolence and absolute freedom from care. Some who, satisfied with the temperature of the climate allotted to them and the exuberance of the earth, can easily gratify their wants, think more of passing the succeeding day as the present, than of diversifying its listlessness with new occupations. The less our knowledge, the less do we desire to know: and hence as it expands do we discover how much remains to be known. The mind may feed itself for years on the imagination; but the intellect at the end will be the same as at the beginning. It is stationary. Personal enjoyments, therefore, rather than mental pleasures, are sought by uncultivated man, among which may be numbered indolence and inactivity: and in proportion to intellectual

advances, they are grosser, refined, uniform or diversified. "The chief happiness of the Kamtschadales consists in idleness, and in satisfying their natural lusts and appetites. These incline them to singing and dancing, and reciting love stories. Their greatest unhappiness or trouble is the want of these amusements. They shun this even at the hazard of their lives; for they think it more eligible to die than to lead a life that is disagreeable to them: which opinion frequently leads to self-murder. This was so common soon after the conquest, that the Russians had great difficulty in putting a stop to it."* Progressive civilization, however low, gives another turn to the mind along with its altered energies, so that it is not now affirmed of the same people, that they continue addicted to suicide.† Possibly those of contracted views or few pursuits, never direct their attention to important purposes: they are content to remain as they have been: nor do they find vacuity irksome: but they who have been incorporated with active, spirited, or interesting occupations, must feel the void when withdrawn to solitude. Thus do persons whose labours have long been great and incessant to enable them to seek retirement, experience languor and disgust, on attaining the haven of their expected pleasures. Of

* *Krascheninnikow*, History of Kamtschatka by Griev p. 176. It is not 150 years since the conquest.

† *Krimssden*, Voyage round the World, vol. ii.

all the world, they are the most in danger of ceasing to enjoy existence, merely from want of the vocations which they wished to abandon.

It is undoubted that an epidemic may seize the mental as well as the corporeal system, as it is undoubted that each has a reciprocal agency. In our own days we have seen multitudes infected by a wild enthusiasm, and we have heard frantic outcries for liberty among those who were really free. Many have been seized by a fiery zeal to promote the interests of heaven, as it were, through the medium of their follies, or by doing mischief to themselves and others. Poor presumptuous wretches! They have become self-accusers, without any fault, and altered the whole tenor of their lives in atonement: they have become fanatics. The rapid dissemination of absurd opinions, while mankind do not esteem it their duty to think, is a mental epidemic. At a certain remote period, the precise date of which is not preserved in history, a remarkable and frenzied desire for suicide originated among the Milesian virgins. Many strangled themselves clandestinely: the prayers and tears of their friends were fruitlessly employed to repress the growing evil, those bent on self-destruction lent a deaf ear to their persuasion, while contriving to escape all their vigilance. But it was at length decreed, that the bodies of the offenders should be publicly exposed naked, along with the fatal cord, which was so alarming to the modesty

of the survivors, that apprehensions of this indignity proved an effectual cure of the malady.*

In the course of the century preceding these observations, a similar remedy was applied to somewhat of a corresponding mental aberration. A number of persons in Denmark were seized by the *tedium vite*; yet they could not resolve on self-destruction from religious scruples. Suicide they considered an offence against heaven, but perishing by the hands of justice could not be immediately chargeable to themselves. We have seen, indeed, that people who had been guilty of enormities, strove to appease the wounds of conscience, and to make atonement by seeking merited public punishment. Hence the disordered brain of the deluded fanatics induced them to imbrue their hands in the blood of innocent children, in order that they might not escape condemnation by the law, as if a crime so atrocious were inferior to voluntary termination of their own worthless existence. The chief purpose expected from conviction, was to insure salvation by public demonstrations of repentance, a doctrine which has encouraged infinite iniquity. To fulfil their wishes in avenging the community, promoted the evil: and it was found expedient, instead of gratifying the fanatical object of the deliric

* *Plutarch de Claris Mulieribus. Aulus Gellius, lib c. 10. Miletus was a city near the north-east coast of Minor.*

culprits by a capital pain, to substitute one of a lower and more ignominious description, which being frequently repeated on each delinquent restrained intending offenders.*

Perhaps if we were enabled to trace the inducements to suicide, we should find the *tædium vitæ* in frequent operation; but mankind are not only restrained by shame from avowing such a weakness, but their design is industriously concealed for the good of their relatives, and from apprehended indignity to their remains. It is not as of old, when the cause, the time, and fashion of suicide might be declared with impunity, and testimonies even invited for the occasion,—at least very few venture to betray their purpose.

The *tædium vitæ*, however, does evidently exist; it is accompanied by a desire to perish, though not by suicide. An officer named Gosnay, confined in the Conciergerie at Paris, in the year 1792 or 1793, a man of affable demeanour, jovial spirit, and full of generosity, shewed himself disgusted with existence. With suitable means of defence in those days of persecution, he refused to employ them. Receiving his indictment, he coolly rolled it up in his hand and lighted his pipe with it, and took his wonted repast before being carried to the tribunal,

* *Coxe*, Account of the Prisons and Hospitals in Russia, Sweden, and Denmark, p. 47. Annual Register for 1767, p. 164.

meantime conversing with his comrades on futurity; In compliance with their wishes, he had named a counsel to defend him, yet he secretly wished to die; and answering all the charges in the affirmative on his trial, he forbade his defender to speak, and desired to be led to death. No alteration was seen on his countenance after receiving sentence: he traversed the courts of the prison, and saluted his comrades with his usual cheerfulness: he ate and drank, and shewed himself the same as ever he had been; and he insisted on taking a parting cup with one of the persons there. Reaching the foot of the scaffold, this courageous officer exclaimed, "Behold I have now arrived at the place I wished to go to!" and tranquilly surrendered the life which he was so eager to part with.

Here also was seen another example, so lately as the year 1823, when a man of science, a son of the celebrated chemist Berthollet, is said to have been affected by the *tedium vite*, which led to the most extraordinary and deliberate suicide. He shut himself up in a close chamber along with a chafing dish of charcoal, described the progress of his sensations in writing, wherein he noted their progress by his watch, and so continued until he was suffocated.

The same country, fertile in the convulsions of the mind, shows how far a steady determination to die may be carried. Susan Sorel, at the age of twenty-five, inherited an independent fortune from her parents, and dwelt on her own estates in Lorraine. She

declined offers of marriage; devoting herself entirely to study, and exercising acts of benevolence. In spring 1794, she directed a small hut of dry wood to be constructed in her garden, which was neatly and plainly furnished: and a few weeks after, having entertained a number of the neighbouring children, presented each with a piece of gold and a ribband, for a decoration on the restoration of royalty, she entered the hut, to which she set fire, and shot herself. She left a letter addressed to the magistrate of her district, disclosing her resolution, and her reasons for suicide, saying, "It is time that I should depart from a world where every thing vile, corrupt, and guilty is fortunate, and every thing elevated, good, and generous is wretched." She said also, that she had chose this means of destruction, and requested that her ashes might be cast into the river Moselle.

In the year 1816, the Sieur Delacour being assailed by the *tædium vitæ*, carried a female named Caroline le Ruth, whom he had met in the public gardens at Paris, to his lodgings, and acquainted her that he intended committing suicide. Unwilling, it may be, to become the sole agent in this desperate deed himself, as has appeared in other men, he offered her an ample bribe to bereave him of life. Though greatly distressed at the time, she steadily resisted his repeated urgency, either from conviction of the wrong, or on account of the

predicament into which she might be brought by consenting to it. Having conducted her elsewhere, he still persisted in his request, adding the gift of his watch, and a note for a thousand francs to his former promises: and while she as peremptorily refused, the infatuated man seized her hand, and put a sharp knife into it, which being by some means forced into his side, he perished.*

A Caucasian tribe, the Ingushes, according to a modern traveller, consider the contempt of life a virtue; for which reason they do not scruple to lay violent hands on themselves, rather than submit to constraint; nor do they appear to conceal their determination. The women show the same heroic firmness. One of the men having carried a young female of his own country to a certain town with the intention of selling her, he was offered a quantity of Persian stuffs by a Jew as a suitable price, and the bargain was concluded. "The buyer and seller withdrew for a moment to look at the goods, on which the girl addressed the bystanders thus, 'I am but a poor orphan whom any one may abuse with impunity. My conductor promised me marriage, and now he is selling me that he may have silk clothes; but I will take care that he never shall wear them:'" with these words she went out into the garden and hung herself upon a tree.†

* *Annual Register*, Vol. 58. for 1816, Occurrences, p. 27.

† *Klaproth*, Travels in the Caucasus and Georgia, p. 344.

But the commission of suicide, from weariness of life, or from any other cause, neither incurred disgrace among the ancients, nor was it uncommon to announce it as in contemplation from other motives. Less solicitude seems to have prevailed, whether the agent might be himself injured, than how his act might affect his surviving relatives. Secrecy and silence would have testified disapproval of the deed; for a veil is drawn over what is abhorred, while other actions are carefully recorded by those who give them approbation. One of the ancient authors relates, that poison was kept publicly at Marseilles, and supplied by order of the magistrates to whoever expressed his desire, sustained by sufficient reasons to depart from this life: and he commends it as a prudent precaution against the fulfilment of hasty determinations. He adds historically, that it is his opinion the custom is not of Gallic but of Greek origin; for he was witness to an aged lady of the highest rank in the island of Cos explaining her reasons for suicide to her fellow-citizens, after resolving to terminate her days by poison. Conceiving also that the presence of Sextus Pompeius, proconsul of Asia, would render her death more distinguished, that illustrious person having attended her, employed all his eloquent dissuasion against it. But she, who had passed her ninetieth year, observed, that hitherto she had enjoyed prosperity, and while it remained she was anxious to terminate existence, lest avidity of life might be the means of exposing

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her to adversity. Exhorting her family, which consisted of two daughters and seven grandchildren, to dwell in amity together, and distributing her property among them, she took the cup with the fatal potion, and offering a libation to Mercury while invoking his aid for a prosperous journey to the shades, she drank it off. Afterwards signifying that some parts of her body were benumbed, and next feeling the vitals in danger, she desired her daughters to perform the last offices, in closing her eyes. The Romans were equally surprised and affected by the novelty of the scene.* The causes of suicide therefore were obviously the *tedium vitæ*, and to be preserved from the hazard of adversity, of which other examples might be told. Strabo affirms explicitly, that Zarmonchagas, an Indian, burnt himself at Athens, lest some calamity might befall him:† and Cicero, though on questionable authority, relates, that some person, after reading one of Plato's works, threw himself into the sea, that he might obviate the danger of misfortune.‡ In the reign of Tiberius likewise, a man of rank, one of the friends and companions of the emperor, while in perfect health, resolved on suicide. His intention being disclosed, the emperor strenuously dissuaded him from

* *Valerius Maximus*, lib. ii. cap. 6. de Externis Institutis, § 9, 10. The ancients closed the eyes of their deceased parents.

† *Strabo*, lib. xv. p. 1048.

‡ *Cicero Quæst. Tuscul.* lib. i. § 34. He quotes an epigram on Cleombrotus by Callimachus.

it, but he fulfilled his purpose; and it was affirmed by those who knew him best, that it was to die in a creditable manner, because the uncertainties in the government might disappoint his hopes of doing so.*

Suicide therefore required no clandestine preparations for its perpetration. None had to apprehend indignity, reproach, or execration of their names by posterity, for having bereaved themselves of existence. Having taken their resolution, they could fulfil it, by departing at the precise moment they thought fit. Tullius Marcellinus, a young man afflicted by a tedious and painful disease, though not incurable, began to deliberate on suicide. He convoked some of his friends, who did not oppose him: and refusing himself sustenance for three days, he escaped from life.† In like manner, Plancus, a Roman orator, and a pupil of Cicero, suffering from an imposthume during his more advanced age, detailed the reasons why he ought to quit the world to a public convocation, and then starved himself.‡ If suicide was considered the part of a wise man who knew how long it was fit for him to remain, and esteemed a magnanimous act, there was little reason to conceal it. The moderns, with one great exception, dare not venture so openly on declaring their resolution to perish, although many have proved as inflexible in

* *Tacitus Annales*, lib. vi. cap. 26.

† *Seneca*, Epistola 77.

‡ *Suetonius de Claris Rhetoribus*, § 5, in fine.

fulfilling it when taken as any among the ancients ; at least if they do so, it is only in fits of impatient passion, and they are believed either insane or insincere. They would obtain still less confidence if signifying it was from weariness of that life whereof all are insatiable, and would hold as long as eternity lasts. Nay, it has been thought extraordinary that a celebrated Scottish physician, who in his public lectures pointed out to his pupils the easiest and most effectual method of committing suicide, should afterwards resort to it.

Doubtless it is melancholy which shades itself under the *tædium vitæ* : And what other motive shall we assign for this kind of suicide than impatience, whatever gives birth to it.

§ 2. *Suicide from Age and Infirmary*.—Perhaps some analogy may be established between suicide from weariness of life, and to escape from a state of personal suffering, or the infirmities of age. There is a condition when mankind, useless to themselves, useless to the world, and feeling existence a burden, may look for greater happiness in a future life. Any other state seems more tolerable than the present, and a release is promised in the change. Among many nations, those infants whom the hand of nature had disfigured from their birth, were deemed unfit to live, whether from the belief that such objects were sent to mark the displeasure of Heaven, or thinking that they could enjoy only a languish-

ing survivance, and would be an oppression to their relatives. Therefore they were destroyed by public or private authority; and this forms one division of the immense field of infanticide which has stigmatized humanity. In the same way we are told, that children acting on principles corresponding, have impiously destroyed their parents; deeming it merciful, however, to relieve them from the load of years becoming intolerable. Something of this kind is obscurely alluded to in the history of a modern tribe of Sumatra and the Eastern Islands; and in regard to others, it has been already illustrated when speaking of the perversion of sentiment and reason in parricide. According to *Ælian*, it was customary in the island of Cos, on the south-east coast of the Mediterranean, for those who had become disabled and useless to their country, to repair as to a festival or a solemn sacrifice, where being crowned they drank hemlock.* A principle not dissimilar is ascribed by *Diodorus* to a tribe of the Troglodytes, who strangled themselves when growing so old as to be incapable of following their flocks; and might be put to death for mutilations, or when labouring under an incurable disease. Likewise should any one have deferred his death, a friend might warn him that it was time to depart, and on his refusal he might be himself his executioner.†

* *Ælian*, *Varie Historiæ*, lib. iii. cap. 37.

† *Diodorus Siculus*, lib. iii. § 33. tom. i. p. 198.

So expedient was it judged to remove the aged, that by a law of Sardis, a town of Asia Minor, sons killed their fathers and buried them, deeming it absurd that "one should survive in decrepitude."* But Diodorus expressly says of the tribe or nation above referred to, that it was lawful to destroy those falling lame, or who were attacked by a desperate or incurable distemper: that the love of life was considered reprehensible when a person was incapable of performing those functions for which it was worth while to live. These principles all tending to the same purport, are identified with the dogmas of the stoic philosophers, which may be traced from Greece to the Ganges. The country of the Troglodytes is commonly believed to have been on the confines of Ethiopia. A Portuguese missionary resident on the eastern coast of Africa, about Mozambique, towards the close of the sixteenth century, recognised the practice of suicide from mutilated members, or personal disfiguration. He relates that Sedanda, the prince of a neighbouring state, having been so much disfigured by leprosy, that he thought either that he was incurable, or that his people could scarcely know him, resolved to poison himself: nor were his intentions to be swayed; for he first declared and then fulfilled them. However, this law, it is observed by the missionary, was not so rigorously practised by

* *Ælian*, *Varie Historiæ*, lib. iv. cap. 1.

another king of the country around Sofala, who having lost a tooth, told his subjects that they would know him the better by that defective token. Likewise he acquainted them, that he was resolved to live and to reign over them as long as he possibly could ; and at the same time " reproached the imprudence of his predecessors, who had put themselves so death on account of accidents befalling their persons, as his preservation was essential to the welfare of his people."* It is disgraceful to mankind that personal disfiguration should be the source of inhumanity. Yet many an innocent creature has been denied compassion, and bereaved of life, merely from its ugliness. Sympathies and antipathies are not sensations at our own command, nor can we tell how they are excited : but so weak and prejudiced is our nature, that some magnanimity and liberality are often required to conquer the disgust inspired by hideous and mis-shapen deformity among the human race. What place do we ourselves merit, who can be prejudiced by the figure of the mouth, the nose, or the eyes, or the colour of another's hair?—But to return. About the year 1738, from the small-pox raging among a North American tribe the Cherokees, they were so deeply mortified by their own disfiguration, that many, in despair of recovering their former appearance, committed suicide. As it was remarked that one of

* *Santos*, Histoire de l'Ethiopie Orientale, p. 17, 32, 33.

the warriors of the tribe had resolved on destroying himself, he was strictly watched by his friends, who removed every lethal weapon from within his reach. He dashed his head against the wall in vain : and at last contrived to choke himself with the handle of some implement thrust down his throat. Others resorted to various methods of self-destruction ; and “ many threw themselves, with sudden madness, into the fire, and there slowly expired as if they had been divested of the native power of feeling pain.”* It is related by the Mahommedan travellers who visited India and China several centuries ago, that a prince of one of these countries lately recovered from small-pox, beholding in a mirror how much he was disfigured, obliged his own nephew to decapitate him, saying, “ Surely it never happened to any other man to remain in his body after such a change. But the body is only an inflated vessel, and the soul quitting it occupies another.”† A Roman satirist writes an epigram on a favourite of one of the emperors, who committed suicide on account of a consuming disease in his face, though we shall not confide in what is unconfirmed by prosaic history.‡

In illustrating this discussion on the sources of suicide still farther, we find that numerous individuals besides those previously named have testifi-

* *Adair*, History of the North American Indians, p. 29

† *Renaudot*, Ancient Accounts of India and China by Mahommedan Travellers, p. 69.

‡ *Martial* Epigram : Lib. i. Ep. 74. *De Festo*.

their approbation of the stoical maxim, that it is better to die than to suffer,—that “an evil life, one intolerable, a life worse than death, is not the same as a good life, a happy one, at least one that may be endured, and is better than death.” We need not debate whether Zeno, the reputed founder of this famous sect, Cleanthes, or Perillus, who had all reached an advanced age, committed suicide from weariness of life, or to shun disease, as the fact is contested;* for there are many examples of such motives actuating others. One of the most noted is preserved in the history of Calanus, a native of India, designated by his contemporaries a philosopher, and that perhaps from an inflexible adherence to tenets, and the rigid practice of customs strange and peculiar. Attacked by a wasting distemper, as he accompanied the Macedonian army on its return to Greece from the East, and having already attained a considerable age, he resolved voluntarily to abridge his days rather than languish longer in pain. Ordering a pile to be constructed of odoriferous wood in the suburbs of Babylon, he fearlessly ascended it, and burnt himself in the presence of Alexander.—“Some who were there concluded this to be an act of insanity, others ascribed it to nothing but vain glory, though there were not wanting men who admired his noble mind

* *Diogenes Laertius*, lib. vii. § 28, 167, 176.

and contempt of death.* That such a practice was not unusual may be inferred from the observation of Quintus Curtius, that there is "a horrid race of people in India," who order themselves to be burnt alive, either when labouring under disease, or when disabled by age.† But the suicide of Peregrinus, another Indian at Rome, is not to be held corroborative of it; for he neither professed himself weary of life, nor did he suffer from any disease. His suicide was still more remarkable, as it seems to have followed the combination of an extraordinary vanity with a kind of delirium. Having announced the hour of the sacrifice, he advanced, with a torch in his hand, to a funeral pile by moonlight, and mounted it in the presence of many spectators. The leaders of the Stoics, whose principles he had imbibed, accompanied him thither; gratified, it is probable, by such a public demonstration of the empire of the mind over the apprehension of suffering and of death.‡

Calanus committed suicide above two thousand years ago to escape disease: How many myriads since that time have prayed for no other close of

* *Diodorus Siculus*, lib. xvii. § 107. tom. ii. p. 244.—*Æl. Varie Historiæ*, lib. v. cap. 6.

† *Quintus Curtius*, lib. viii. cap. 9:

‡ *Lucian de Morte Peregrini*; Opera, tom. iii. p. 325. iv
Another named Zarmarus burnt himself at Athens in the
of Augustus. *Dio*, lib. liv. § 9. tom. 1. p. 739. Hal
1750, in folio.

their afflictions! How many miserable beings are there even now, "which long for death, but it cometh not, and dig for it more than for hid treasures; which rejoice exceedingly and are glad when they can find the grave!" But awed by religion, restrained by moral principle, and alarmed for their posthumous fame, few have dared to seek relief in suicide. Still the feelings and the passions of mankind being the same in all ages, and in all countries, are ever ready to burst forth in vengeance against themselves or their fellows, by some desperate action, where custom, refined by reason, does not subdue them. Surely it requires the firmest resolution, the strongest sense of evil, to remain in intolerable wretchedness which admits of no alleviation, and of which there is no visible termination. If persons deprived of liberty, condemned to unabating labour, oppressed by cruel and capricious masters, void of the hopes of refuge, have voluntarily sought a better state, shall it seem strange that those tortured by the hand of nature envied their lot, or have imitated their example?* There is a certain state of suffering which nothing transcends, and to which all besides is mitigation.

Calanus was an Indian: he belonged to that country whose customs seem to have commenced with time itself, and to remain unchangeable. The aged believing their recovery hopeless, direct

* *Report on the Slave Trade*, var. loc.

themselves to be carried to the edge of the river Ganges when the tide has receded, and there being covered with mud by their friends, they are overwhelmed on its return.*

It is only a few years since an Indian Rajah wrote to his friend, an Englishman, a general in the service of the native powers, that his miseries, from long protracted disease, having become intolerable, he had now resolved to put a period to them by voluntary death. For that purpose he was then on his way to the Ganges; but previous to the event, he was desirous of once more embracing his friend, whom he requested to meet him. The general immediately left his quarters, designing to offer all consolation to the afflicted chief, but he had not advanced far on the journey before receiving intelligence that he had drowned himself in the river Jumna.† Suicide of this kind, in the streams reputed sacred, is believed by the Indians to be a meritorious deed, and to accelerate the entrance of the soul to paradise—a part of their religious creed which perhaps may aid the explanation of a certain passage in the work of Edrisi, the celebrated Nubian geographer, largely intermixed with fable, and otherwise unintelligible. A lofty tree of iron called Barsicul in the Indian language, he says, stands by a great river which is supposed to have its source in Paradise.

* *Grandpre*, Voyage to the Indian Ocean, 1789, 1790, tom. i. p. 61.

† *Franklin*, life of General Thomas, p. 61.

Whoever climbs the tree to dash himself on a column in the flood below, is immediately borne by its waters to the regions of bliss.*

The rivers and fountains had their deities among the ancients; and in the mythology of various countries, some relation is figured between the waters and departed spirits. Customs, as well as the imagination, have given birth to traditions which, in the process of time, have alike been lost though true, and have been rated as historical facts though false. It is essential to beware of those fanciful explanations which authors sometimes offer of matters which they do not understand: for many customs are implicitly followed without any such motives as are freely ascribed to the agents. Explanations are almost invariably of a date far more recent than that at which the custom is known to have subsisted; and while we are ignorant of its origin or uniform practice, they can only be equivocal at best. Hence the importance of scrupulous analysis, and undeviating historical research, as a check on the exuberant theories which both the learned and illiterate of the moderns are so ready to offer.

An interval exceeding 2000 years separated the æras of Calanus the philosopher and the Indian Rajah. The record of the intermediate ages in their countries would not prove barren in illustrations of suicide to terminate pain and sickness.

* *Edrisi Geographia Nubiensis*, p. 70. Edit. 1619, in 4to.

But enough are found elsewhere, besides those already given. Pliny the elder quotes the words of Varro, that a Roman knight, under an attack of gout, anointed his limbs with poison, and lost all sensation along with the acuteness of his torment. He also distinguishes the different kinds of pain so intolerable as to induce the commission of suicide; and he calls nature compassionate, for having devised poisonous products of the earth to aid the escape of mankind from violence and misery.* The author has heard of a person who, from excruciating pains in the head, confirmed his sentiments by attempting suicide thrice at different intervals, and always ineffectually. Pliny the younger relates, that his friend Corellius Rufus announced intended suicide at 67 years of age, from preferring death to the distress of a consuming malady in survivance. He was not to be deterred by the remonstrances of numerous affectionate relatives, and pertinaciously refused sustenance until he expired. He likewise gives an instance of a woman throwing herself into a lake along with her husband whom she counselled to suicide on account of incurable distemper.†

Old age, pain, and infirmity, therefore, sometimes offer too formidable an aspect to be contemplated with corresponding fortitude and resignation.

* *Pliny Historia Naturalis*, lib. xxv. § 7.—Lib. i. Quin et venena nostri misertam instituisse credi potest

† *Pliny Epistolæ*, lib. i. Epist. 12.—Lib. vi. Ep. 2/

unless for the evils of life, it is seldom that mankind admit they have lived long enough. As the Grecian philosopher of old, they reject the office of a friendly hand, desiring the cessation of pain, but not the close of existence. Nevertheless, according to Mela and Pliny the elder, the ancient Northerners cheerfully leaped off a certain rock into the sea, rather from being satiated with life than weary of it.* In Sweden, the aged and incurable are said to have directed their friends to carry them to rocks overhanging the sea, still pointed out by the name of Odin's Hall, from whence they cast themselves headlong among the waves.† It was thought inexpedient by the Heruli, an ancient tribe dwelling beyond the Ister, that the aged should survive in disease or imbecillity; and they seem to have been compelled to promote their own death, if not actually to destroy themselves.‡

The Indian Rajah, perhaps, is far from a solitary example in the modern history of various countries.

* *Pomponius Mela* de Situ Orbis, cap. 5.—*Pliny Historia Naturalis*, lib. iv. cap. 26. The former seems to allot this custom to the most western Scythians, known by the name of Hyperboreans. But their abode has been much contested. "Habitant lucos silvasque et ubi eos vivendi satietas, magis quam tedium vitæ cepit, hilares redimiti sertis semetipsi in pelagus ex certa rupe precipites dant. Id eis funus eximium est."—*Bartholinus Antiquitates Danicæ*, p. 384.

† *Sir William Temple*, *Miscellanea*, Part ii. Essay 3. ch. 4. Works, vol. i. p. 216, in folio.

‡ *Procopius de Bello Getico*, lib. ii. cap. 14.

Etoile, in his Journal of contemporary affairs, relates, that Francis de Saignes, a councillor of parliament, labouring under extreme distress, and feeling himself near the close of life, arose before day-break, and mounting his mule, rode to the banks of the river Seine, into which he threw himself and was drowned, in the year 1578. But, on pretence of his being in a fever, he was nevertheless solemnly interred in consecrated ground, with the assistance, among others, of the President de Thou, whose son he had constituted his heir.*

§ 3. *Compulsory Suicide*.—The preceding remarks may suitably introduce us, as an interlude, to a few illustrations of compulsory suicide, or of persons unwilling to die being compelled to become their own destroyers, a cruel and pitiable fate. For although we may wean ourselves from life, and bring our mind to that condition as admits the contemplation of death without affright, or we are even glad to seek a final refuge in it from intolerable evils, it is an awful prospect to those who are endeared by enjoyments to existence.

But ascending to history for examples, we are opposed by the imperfections and obscurities inseparable from the wreck of time; we meet with breaches and discordance, and are obliged to support our theories by analogies where it would be desirable to

* *Etoile Journal de Choses Memorables*, tom. i. p. 38.

have facts. Time is a grand destroyer; yet sometimes light and trifling matters are upborne by the stream, while those that are weighty and important sink irrecoverably, and perish from remembrance. If in modern æras remarkable aberrations from the ordinary course of things be witnessed, and if corresponding deviations be referred, though less explicitly, to remoter ages, we shall not be mistaken in blending them together to obtain a sufficient guide to truth. All the mass of history is framed of fragments, or compounded from the gleanings which have been saved from oblivion.

In the interior of Africa there is a kingdom called Eyeo, governed by a prince of absolute power; to whom, nevertheless, his subjects, if dissatisfied, are entitled to send a deputation, signifying that it is now time for him to repose from the cares of state. He thanks them for the message, and retiring, directs his women to strangle him. About the year 1774, however, the wonted mission having reached the reigning monarch, he had courage to withstand its purpose, replying that he was resolved yet to watch for the benefit of his people; and thus saving his own life, like the king of the country surrounding Sofala, emancipated his successors from a barbarous custom.* It is still better ascertained, that in the year 1815, a chief dependent on another

* The name of this kingdom does not seem to be satisfactorily explained. *Dalzel, History of Dahomy*, p. 12, 156.

African potentate, the king of Ashantee, having rendered himself obnoxious to the people, they commanded him to kill himself. He did so after obtaining a respite for a few weeks, during which similar preparations were made for his exit, as practised at the interment of distinguished personages.*

Neither of these is said to have any relation to religious suicide, in obedience to the ordinances, or to appease the wrath of the divinity. But Diodorus, treating of Ethiopia, relates this most singular custom as implicating the death of the kings. The priests at Meroe, in the service of the gods, being of the highest authority, sent a messenger to the sovereign, ordering him to put himself to death; for such they affirmed was the divine pleasure, which no mortal dared to dispute. Some other reasons were given which credulity would enforce, and which proved effectual. Diodorus proceeds to explain the overthrow of this ecclesiastical tyranny, which in early ages subsisted without restraint or force of arms, but merely from the influence of superstition, until Ergamenes, one of their kings, skilled in the learning and philosophy of the Greeks, ventured to hold it in contempt. With spirit becoming his royal dignity, he marched with a band of military to a strong place, where the Golden Temple of the Ethiopians was situated, and killing all the priests, instituted new ceremonies on the

* *Bondick, Mission to Ashantee, p. 252, 253.*

abolition of the old.* In general, religious suicide is an act of frenzied devotion, whereby the hapless devotee hopes to purchase the divine favour by instant transference to eternal life. But it also appears as an act of despair, from having provoked celestial vengeance. One of the latest British navigators observes, that the natives of the Marquesas, an insular group in the Southern Ocean, venerate a family divinity adopted from an illustrious relative deceased, whose virtues or eminent deeds they believe have entitled him to sanctity. Should they be induced to conclude, from occurrences, that the resentment of the divinity cannot be appeased by their priests, "they fancy they labour under his displeasure, and, with an unequalled resignation and calmness, starve themselves to death."† The progress of self-immolation, from religious motives, may be regularly traced from voluntary effusion of the blood, oblation of pieces of the flesh or of an entire member, to actual suicide. It is said that the Japanese drown themselves in honour of their idols. In India, that vast theatre of sanguinary superstitions, some devotees are not only content to perish by the waters of streams reputed sacred, but bury themselves alive;‡ or, amidst their en-

* *Diodorus Siculus*, lib. iii. § 6. tom. i. p. 177. *Strabo*, lib. xvii. tom. ii. p. 1178.

† *Shillibeer*, Narrative of the Briton's Voyage, p. 39.

‡ *Hamilton*, Account of Nepal, p. 138: A priest buried him-

thusiastic transports, leap over precipices in return for boons solicited from their gods, or prostrate themselves under the wheels of a car bearing a colossal divinity in holy procession, in order that they may be crushed to death. Recurring to the older narratives of eastern history, we find it said by Benjamin of Tudela, that the islands of Cinrag are inhabited by a people called Dogbiims, who worship fire, and their grandees make a vow to burn themselves.* But his accounts are so vague, and afterwards so evidently degenerate into fable, that we can neither ascertain the region of which he speaks, nor confide in the whole relation. Some of the other narratives regarding the East affirm, that at a solemn festival held once in twelve years in honour of a certain idol, in the province of Quilicare, the king having directed an oration to it, began literally to cut himself to pieces in presence of the people, and closed his existence by a mortal wound.† Marco Polo, the celebrated Venetian traveller, visited the coast of Malabar in the thirteenth century. He relates as an extraordinary custom, that when a culprit has been condemned, and is about to undergo his sentence, he declares his willingness to sacrifice himself in honour of some particular idol. His friends then carry him in triumph, proclaim-

self alive, "a manner of taking leave of the world which considered as very laudable."

* *Benjamin Rabbi fils de Iona de Tudela*, Voyages, ch.

† *Barbosa Dell' Indie Orientali* ap: Ramusio, tom. i. p

ing his zeal in worship of the divinity. They provide him with twelve knives, and on arrival at the spot where he should have suffered, he exclaims aloud, that he devotes himself to death in honour of the idol, and after piercing different parts of his body with each, he dies by a mortal blow from his own hand.* Thus, combining all these facts, and allowing whatever confidence may seem due to them, we are entitled to credit the words of Diodorus, that sovereigns immersed in ignorance, or blinded by superstition, did not refuse obedience to the fatal mandate of their priests, to close their existence because it was the will of the gods. Even in the present age it is alleged, that suicide for the love of Christ is one of the tenets of a sect established in Russia: a frightful scene is said to have been lately exhibited by that, or some other sect entertaining analogous principles; and the Abbé Paris, a Jansenist, is known to have embraced a voluntary death to make atonement with the Deity for supposed offences.†

Perhaps it is not so unreasonable a conclusion, that suicide in veneration of a divinity shall pave the way to immortality; for it is the highest testimony which can be paid of earthly zeal; therefore the ancient ministers of religion possibly might

* *Marco Polo Delle Cose de Tartari e dell' Indie Orientali*, lib. xx. § 2.

† The history of this Russian sect, which is said to be denominated Rascolnitz, or Roskolnitzzi, seems exceedingly obscure.

compel to suicide. The same author who has recorded this remarkable custom, speaks of other compulsory suicide, on the information of Iambulus, a traveller describing an island where he had been detained seven years, now supposed to be Ceylon. The longevity of the inhabitants, he says, was very great; for in that salubrious climate they generally attained 150 years in perfect health. Those labouring under mutilations, or personal infirmities, however, were forced to commit suicide, and those who had attained a certain age, beyond which it was not lawful for any one to survive. Forming themselves into tribes or communities, each was ruled by the oldest person among them, to whom all paid deference as their king: and he having reached the age of 150 years, voluntarily closed his existence in compliance with the custom, leaving the next to succeed him. In that island grew two species of plants, whereon if any one reposed, life declined into a pleasing slumber, and terminated without pain or sickness.* Perhaps the historian displays his credulity in advancing the relation of Iambulus, and part may be fabulous while part is true: but reflecting on the narrative of the Portuguese missionary, it receives some corroboration from it and the preceding authorities.

Reverting to Æthiopia, we find that by the laws of the inhabitants, when an individual was capitally

* *Diodorus Siculus*, lib. ii. § 55, 57, 58, tom. i. p. 167
168, 169.

convicted, a lictor was sent to him bearing the signal of death, at the sight of which he retired and killed himself. Neither could an offender escape by exile : and so imperative was this custom, that the mother of a condemned person who intended flight after the lethal signal had come from the king, herself fastened her girdle around his neck and strangled him without resistance.* It was the custom of the ancient Greeks to furnish a bowl of poison to malefactors, or to the innocent falling under an unjust sentence, and each by that means became his own executioner. If the laws of the Romans did not compel to suicide, their usages granted the *liberum arbitrium mortis*, or the choice of the manner in which the condemned preferred to perish. Many took their election : they died by their own hands ; and some, whose courage failed them, owed the friendly office to others. But at certain periods of the empire, so intolerable was the prevalent tyranny, so great the uncertainty of life, that numbers hurried from it, anticipating a fate which they dreaded, or which they believed to be inevitable. There are approximations to suicide : when death from the hand of another is ready for the victim who refuses it from his own. While Mithridates, king of Pontus, waged a sanguinary war with the Romans, he experienced reverses, obliging him to abandon his camp, and threatening

* *Diodorus Siculus*, lib. iii. § 5. tom. i. p. 177.

the capture of his wives and sisters. Among these there were two of the latter, Roxana and Statira, still in a virgin state; and two of the former, Monime and Berenice. Monime was greatly celebrated among the Greeks: she had resisted the lawless passion of the king, whereupon he had sent her a diadem, and declared her the partner of his throne. Yet her union with him had not been productive of permanent felicity, and thence she contemplated with grief and indignation that beauty which, instead of a fond husband had procured her an imperious master, and had surrounded her with a guard of barbarians in place of domestic comforts. Banished far from Greece, her native soil, she had lost the real pleasures of life, and in seeking after happiness she had found it a phantom. Mithridates resolved that none of his females should fall into the hands of the hostile Romans, though it were by the sorrowful alternative of bereaving them of existence. Being now remote from them at Pharmacia, he sent Bacchides, a confidential officer, to fulfil their cruel destiny. On his arrival, Bacchides acquainted the princesses that it was necessary they should die; but they were at liberty to choose their own mode of death: Whereupon Monime, snatching the diadem from her head, encircled her neck with it, that it might accomplish the fatal office. But breaking—she cried, “O accursed band, couldst thou not at least serve me on this occasion!” Then spitting on it, she

cast it away, and stretched out her neck to Bacchides. Berenice swallowed poison, of which her mother, who was present, obtained a portion at her own request, and speedily expired; but her daughter's sufferings were long, and Bacchides was obliged to terminate them. Roxana, after venting bitter reproaches against Mithridates, likewise took a lethal draught. Statira, however, died without uttering any unkind word, rather commending her brother for not forgetting them, and providing that they might die free and undishonoured, when he must have been full of anxieties regarding his own life.* Such are the tragedies allotted to the innocent in wars for glory or ambitious conquest: tragedies, which every age and every country has witnessed in varied repetition. The wives and sisters of Mithridates were compelled to suicide.—Massinissa presented a poisoned cup to Sophonisba. She took it meekly from his hands. Miserable is the fortune of the dignified, who are not sustained in their dignity; who are elevated from the safe content of humble life to perils amidst splendour. Those who remain in tranquil obscurity are never menaced by such dire alternatives to preserve the honour of princes.

It is written of the ancient Saxons occupying the territory now called Westphalia, that the virgin who stained the honour of her father's house, and the wife

* *Appian*, Lib: Mithridaticus. *Dio*, lib. xxxvii. § 13. *Plutarch* in vita Luculli.

who violated her conjugal fidelity, were compelled to expiate their fault by suicide; and that their bodies were burnt while the corruptor was executed over the same pile.* An Englishman visiting Germany about 200 years ago, relates the perpetuation of such a custom; for, says he, "our age hath seen two notable examples of this justice in Germany; one of a duchess who, by authority of her husband and of her own brother, was for this crime forced to drink poison secretly for preserving of all their honours."† In modern times it is said, that this has been held an act of mercy in different nations: suicide has been permitted to prevent the shame and exposure of public punishment for degrading offences.

When the Turkish minister is condemned to die by his master, he is at the same time ordered to perform his ablutions, to say his prayers, and then deliver his head to the officer who communicates the sentence. Its execution is committed to no one but himself. Thus does the most arbitrary

* *Alfordus Annales Ecclesiæ Anglo-Saxonice*, tom. ii. p. 569. In the year 745, the German legate of the apostolic see writes thus to Ethelbald king of England: "Nam in antiqua Saxoniam, si virgo paternam domum cum adulterio maculaverit, vel si mulier maritata, fracta fœdere matrimonii adulterium perpetraverit, aliquando cogunt eam propria manu, per laqueum suspensam vitam finire: et supra bustum illius incensæ et concremata corruptorem ejus suspendunt."

† *Moryson*, Ten Years Travell, Part III. Book iv. chap. 3. p. 210.

governor, one who makes his inferiors tremble, and despotically bereaves them of life, patiently apply the bowstring to his own neck if signified to be the will of the emperor.*

It is not explained whether this passive obedience follows, because he deems it impious to resist his fate, or whether he hopes for more immediate access to paradise by submission to the royal decree, as a death-blow from the monarch's hand is believed to open its gates. Illustrious state delinquents in the empire of China are allowed, as a token of special favour and indulgence, to commit suicide after conviction and sentence. On a late accession, the sovereign finding that the infirmities of his aged predecessor had enabled the prime minister to usurp a dangerous influence, had him arraigned in the year 1807, and condemned to suffer a slow and painful death. The unfortunate offender, however, was permitted the milder alternative of becoming his own destroyer, not from any regard for him, as an imperial edict announced, but from respect for the government of the empire.† A similar mitigation of punishment is said to be permitted in the

* *Cantemir, History of the Othman Empire*, p. 121.

† *Staunton, Laws of China*, p. 499. The emperor declares in his edict, that "Ho-quen is hereby permitted to become his own executioner: but let it be known, that it is our regard for the honour and dignity of the administration of this empire, and not any personal consideration for Ho-quen, that has influenced this our present determination."

island of Japan. The Dutch ambassadors relate, that an emperor, who succeeded in the year 1690, having conceived some dislike to his brother, compelled him, according to the custom of that country, to commit suicide; and they observe, that those accused of rebellion are beset in their houses, where they are allowed the choice of a voluntary death or to surrender.* From recent information we learn, that in the kingdom of Ashantee, a man of rank who kills his equal is generally allowed to die by his own hands.†

Analogies to spontaneous suicide, therefore, are not uncommon in history; and however we may reprehend a voluntary action of this nature, one which is compulsory cannot incur the same reproach, from an unfortunate being seeking a milder alternative than the fate which threatens him.

§ 4. *Suicide from Love*.—We are perpetually reminded by some sad catastrophe, that the simple ordinances of nature, devised for human felicity, are liable to frustration and disappointment from human conduct, or circumstances unforeseen by mortal sagacity. Adolescence unfolds the most delightful of all the passions which can warm the breast, which each created being is destined, by the grand arrange-

* *Ambassades de la Compagnie Hollandoise vers L'Empereur du Japon*, p. 36, 202.

† *Bowdich*, Mission to Ashantee.

ments of the universe, to feel ; for its subsistence is the prop of the world. The other passions are awakened at times and at seasons which may occur, but which may not occur because no immediate and ulterior purpose seems dependent on their subsistence or their energies. They may remain eternally dormant amidst the advances of earthly concerns, and without interruption of their order. It is otherwise here ; mutual affection must be necessarily evolved, inspiring pleasure while renovating in endless series the deperdition of time, and preserving the busy theatre of life from solitude.—Yet is this the chief passion refined in the great laboratory of nature to be incorporated with our frame, productive of the most afflicting class of suicides? “O Love, how delicious are thy pure enjoyments to mortals ! But were it shown how many victims thou hast sacrificed—all the blood thou hast spilt—the philanthropist would hate thee, or bury himself in a desert to be withdrawn from thy seductions.”

Already have the fatal results of rage, of jealousy, disappointment, or inverted affections, been described. It is not inconsistent that they should be numerous : nor can they cease or be extirpated so long as human frailty is liable to be thus overborne. But although they should appear most frequent from that passion which predominates over the rest, certain causes sometimes operate against them, while on the other hand they lead to deplorable catastrophes.

It is more unusual, indeed, that the stronger sex give way to despair, and yield up existence when their hopes of possessing the object of desire is frustrated. But as they can freely shed their blood in testimony of the vehemence of affection, so can they resign life by becoming their own destroyers. It is true, that the important concerns which for common are specially allotted to their share, may save them from solitarily brooding over disappointment; but sudden resolves may be precipitately executed. Yet the larger catalogue of suicides among the fairer part of the creation is a lamentable record of the perverted issue of a passion originally designed for pleasure: and that which follows the perjuries of men alone is the more cruel, because the bloom of youth and the age of inexperience so often conspire in paving the way to destruction. Even without the contrivance of stratagem, melancholy proofs are afforded by some too confident in their own strength, how feeble are all resolutions to steel the breast against those soft emotions destined to sway untutored mankind. Danger ever hovers in the train of the passions: those who deal with them dwell in turbulence: and only self-controul can forbid them the victory. It is they which ensnare: It is they which, banishing the hold of reserve, loosen the zone of virgin safety; which belie the rising frown in smiles; which never find the fond delusion so grateful as when returned as it is inspired. Some

there are who vow, and mean to give an honest pledge; who scorn deceit, and hasten to fulfil the assurance which indiscreet affection has prematurely rewarded. But that which passion promises, ascendant reason, nay, abating inclination, often refuses to sanction in performance. Wretched is she who finds, that in an unguarded moment treachery has lulled her to her ruin. Innocence is unsuspecting of guile: those of the worthiest nature think least of vice, they harbour nothing unseen, and so do the best and fairest fall. Where now are all those impassioned endearments, never fading while they were soliciting? No excellence was sufficiently worthy, no ornament was too bright to adorn an image already transcendent. Where the fervid protestations plighting everlasting faith, speaking protection, inviting to confidence? Where those delightful hours foretold of indissoluble union, always renovating, for always flowing from the pure source of disinterested affection? Have they sunk under the load of treachery, or evaporated from cloying possession?

The change is frightful. Perfidy has distilled its venomous dregs to wound the peace and stain the purity of its victim. While yet held in suspense, she strives to reclaim the destroyer, his cold disdain or stern repulse signify, in less equivocal language than from the lips, that the charms of beauty have waned in satiated passion. Conscious dishonour, and the bitter sneer of calumny, bid her

fly the social throng: the shafts of disappointment have fixed their barbs in her breast, plunge her in despair and desolation. O miserable fate! for the dawning of her days was glorious: robed by the Graces, she rose refulgent in innocence: fascination hung on the melody of her voice: As the vernal flower is nurtured by the pearly dew, she flourished while her virtues unfolded under the kindly culture of parental love. But the sun of her earthly joys has set. This sublunary sphere has been a scene of trial and sorrow—the night is gathering fast around her. But a brighter world opens a celestial asylum.—Yet only a little suffering, transient, short, and easily borne,—and her soul is free:

“Let not the youth inconsiderately tamper with the virtue of his mistress, and thus prove her assassin by his infidelity. Terrible examples warn the credulous and inexperienced maid of her danger, and teach her to preserve an incessant guard over herself.”*

Were it not for certain counteracting principles summoned into operation, this distressing class of suicides perhaps would be immoderately extended. The resentment which naturally follows discovered treachery, inspires its victim with hatred, or excites a thirst to be revenged on the betrayer, which could least be hoped from contemplations of suicide. Affection, also, naturally originating for her offspring, conquers the desire of death, and early solitudes

* *Spicess, Biography of Suicides.*

regarding its welfare, tells the mother, who has endured so cruel an injury, to spare herself. After the first dire paroxysm of grief, time, that best unction of human smart, offers its balsam to alleviate the wound, and restore composure. Nevertheless, many too soft and gentle for indignation, too tender to bear the rude ruffling of adversity and the sharp edge of detraction, voluntarily perish from the dread of shame.

But it is difficult to trace the source of the catastrophe to a passion whose subsistence, sensibility prompts mankind to disguise, much rather than to disclose to the inquisitive. That magnanimity which actuates the one sex, and that timid reserve animating the other, unite in urging both to concealment. It is so unlikely an issue to attend affection where known, because of all inducements that should be the strongest to survivance, another construction is put upon the deed: Likewise, the definition of *suicide from love* has so little correctness, that impatience, rage, or jealousy, or chiefly grief, is more just and expressive. So the gamester commits suicide for his losses; not because he gamed, but from regret at his misfortune, or from shame that he cannot keep his engagements.

No hazard is so deep as to involve the affections, no violence so great as when offered to excited sensibilities. Thence it is probable that this kind of suicide never has been rare. Not less than three victims are recorded once to have thus perished within fifteen

days in the metropolis, nearly a century ago; and it is doubtful whether the evil be greatly abating, though so seldom coming to light.* Several credible instances, some of successful, some of abortive attempts, have been related to the author; and some occur of an anomalous and complicated description.

In the year 1814, a young man belonging to the British army in Portugal, formed an attachment to a female, who did not meet it with indifference. But their intended union was prevented from peculiar circumstances attending her residence in the family of an officer where the former was accustomed to visit. No illustrations are afforded of the opposition they experienced, or of the means adopted to overcome it; for invention is seldom unfruitful on such occasions. Disappointment of their wishes in this life, however, and perhaps too great impatience to anticipate the term when they might be gratified, inclined these unhappy beings to resolve on uniting in suicide. Having met in a garden at Lisbon one evening in April, the deluded female drank a quantity of laudanum from a vial, requesting her paramour at the same time to terminate her existence. He too followed her example, and having

* *Muralt, Letters on the French and English*, p. 44. "It is common to hear people talk of men and women that make away with themselves, as they call it, and generally for reasons that would appear to us but trifles: the men perhaps for the cruelty or inconstancy of their mistresses, and the women for the indifference of the men."

swallowed the residue, first shot his mistress through the head, and then discharged two pistols at his own. The poor victim of her frenzied passion rose no more: but neither was this nor subsequent attempts at suicide by the other effectual, as he had still survived a year after the catastrophe.*

But suicide, even where the passions are more quiescent, may ensue; or where love, amidst disappointed fortune, may urge its hapless victims to hasten from the world.—Sophia and Henrietta de St Marie were the daughters of an aged officer, a knight of the order of St Louis, who dwelt on his estate in Dauphiny. Attacked by a corps of the revolutionary banditti, who thirsted for blood and pillage, spite of the remonstrances of their officers, two sons of the Baron Fleuriotte, he fell in defending his mansion. Though the officers were unable to preserve its owner, they aided the rescue of his daughters, and afterwards retired from the republican army. How the succeeding interval was occupied is not explained; but in those miserable times of desolation, plots and persecution allowed the worthy no repose. Felix and Adolphus de Fleuriotte, the two officers themselves also proscribed, at length found both Henrietta and Sophia employed as milliners in Paris. Their common calamities rivetted their affection; all agreed to be united in marriage, and then escape to Switzerland. But in June 1794, Henrietta received a

* *Annual Register*, Vol. 57. Occurrences, p. 36.

letter by the hands of a child from Adolphus, who, along with his brother, had been denounced, saying he was in the prison of La Force: that the morrow would be their last day; and he trusted that she would not survive him. The unhappy youths seem to have anticipated a more ignominious death by suicide. The sisters repairing to the neighbourhood, remained all night in an inn; then having gone into the park of Chantilly before sunrise, they were found lifeless beneath a venerable oak in each others arms. Around the handle of two daggers which had done the fatal office was a billet inscribed, "Felix and Adolphus, your Sophia and Henrietta join you." They were interred on the spot, and their names carved on the oak were legible in the year 1799.

So long since as the year 1693, Charles Blount, an Englishman, committed suicide from the vehemence of affection for his sister-in-law, whom he despaired of obtaining a dispensation to marry.

It is impossible to follow the train of sensations in regular order, when the mind itself labours in tumult: intervals seem only the milder stages of lunacy. In 1742, Madame de Bethisy, a beautiful and accomplished canoness of the Abbey of Poussay, sacrificed herself in a fit of remorse and disappointment, to atone for her actual infidelity to a person on whom she had previously bestowed her affections, and who had deserted her.*

* *Richelieu Memoires*, tom. viii. p. 19—26.

A short time after the preceding incident in Portugal, one nearly as disastrous occurred in England, resulting also from the unconquerable violence of the passions; and hence it may be seen how morbid sensibilities prepare the mind for excesses diverging from the original affection. A young female was forsaken by a man who had professed an attachment to her, but married another at Portsmouth in the year 1815. Instead of sinking under the mortification, or recurring to vengeance on herself, she appears from the first to have conceived a violent thirst for revenge on the deceiver. Under a fictitious name she sent for him one morning to a neighbour's house, where, presenting him with a cup, she said, "I am going to London: will you not drink with me?" He tasted the contents, and returned it. "I wish it had been poison," she continued;—"I understand you are married," resumed the forsaken female; "Are you not sorry for it?"—"No," replied the man: whereon drawing a weapon from her sleeve, she pierced him with a deep wound, and part of the blade breaking off, remained in his body. After he had succeeded in disarming this unfortunate being, becoming desperate in her distress, she hastened to a druggist's shop, and having procured a quantity of arsenic, swallowed it in water and expired.*

* *Annual Register*, Vol. 57. Occurrences, p. 105. A Coroner's inquest returned, lunacy.

It is therefore easy to discover, that the greater the variety of the passions excited, and the less they are subjected to controul, the more frequently ought their ungovernable excess to terminate in suicide. Friendship may prepare for affection : jealousy may result from love, and revenge from jealousy. The absolute close of violence is self-destruction, or the destruction of others. A modern traveller observes, that in his journal he finds " eleven examples of persons of rank who, in five or six years, have killed their mistresses and themselves in Italy."* So many in one country having fallen under the notice of a single individual, shews that the number must be great in Europe. Several in this island have been previously referred to.

But that is the most deplorable of all alternatives, where mankind must become their own destroyers, and the destroyers of their beloved, to preserve them from a fate more cruel in reserve from the hands of an enemy : Yet this has been the lot of legions. Pausanias records when Metellus invaded Greece, the commander of the Achaians, " that he might not fall into the hands of the enemy, first killed his wife, and then himself drank poison."† Intermediate examples are innumerable: and the contest between the royal and the patriotic party in South America, affords a recent illustration. The general of the latter finding it necessary

* *Rome, Naples, et Florence*, en 1817, p. 158.

† *Pausanias*, lib. vii. cap. 16.



to retreat, engaged to succour Barcelona, if its commander, an Englishman, could maintain the place during three days longer. He contrived to do so with difficulty; but, disappointed of the expected relief, he ordered the gates to be opened by his garrison on a certain signal. It was given: but at the same moment the discharge of two deadly weapons announced his own destruction, and that of a beloved female who had just been united to him, and whom he had no other means of preserving from the indignities of the enemy, or himself from their barbarity.*

Many such unhappy suicides in modern times could be named; and comprehending farther examples among them, where either of two parties destroyed the other, and then launched into eternity. If confidence shall be reposed in the Biography of Suicides, let the reader seek them there.

§ 5. *Suicide for the loss of Kindred.*—The anguish we endure on losing our friends and relatives, testifies how unwilling we are to part with them, that we are never content with the longest enjoyment of their society, that we never can consent to their being torn from our embraces. But, considering the transience of earthly gifts, that all which we think our own is only lent to us, and may be recalled without any warning, perhaps it is wrong

* *Hippisley*, Narrative of the Expedition to the Rivers Orinoco and Aguire, p. 466.

to incorporate our affections so deeply with what is most perishable.* Yet our sorrow is beyond the bounds of consolation: we beat our breasts, and tear our hair; we murmur at the decrees of Providence, and disturb the world with our lamentations.

Sometimes affectionate parents have voluntarily resigned themselves to death, or united in the fate bereaving them of their children: sometimes others bound by the ties of consanguinity, have refused to remain behind: but chief of all has the privation of husbands and protectors, those guardians of tenderness and imbecillity, enlarged the too ample list of suicides. Beginning in the earliest ages of time, self-destruction subsisted thousands of years ago the same as it does at the present day in the East: the same piles were kindled, the same ceremonies observed in the sacrifice, and the same heroic devotion displayed by those from whom fortitude was to be the least expected. It spread in the west, extended to the north, and has been seen in the southern hemisphere. As if an inheritance in families, it has passed from mothers to daughters in lineal succession, so to speak, throughout repeated generations; nor can we say when it commenced among them, or how it closed. The historian of an ancient race of Messenians thus continues, "If matters be so, three in successive descent from Marpeza slew themselves for the loss of their husbands."†

* *Epictetus* Enchiridion, cap. 15.

† *Pausanias*, lib. iv. cap. 2.



Among the ancient Heruli, a tribe wont to appease their deities by human sacrifice, the wife of any one deceasing voluntarily strangled herself soon after at her husband's tomb, to prove her affection, and procure the reward of posthumous fame. Her survivance induced everlasting shame, and was the reproach of his relations.* On the banks of the Vistula there formerly dwelt the Winedi, described as "a wicked and odious race," but so affectionate in the conjugal state, that wives would not remain behind their departed spouses; and she who suffered death by her own hand, in order that her body might be consumed on the same pile as that of her husband, was renowned among the survivors.†

The queens of Sweden accompanied their husbands to the shades, and their cremation at Upsal has been already commemorated, along with solitary examples in other countries. But all did not feel the duty alike imperious; for Saxo inveighs against a princess brought from Scotland, who dreaded to die with her husband Amleth. On a certain occasion, Eric, King of Sweden, had made a vow, that he would not survive more than ten years, provided he could obtain the victory over his enemies. But

* *Procopius de Bello Getico*, lib. ii. cap. 14.

† *Bonifacius*, *Epicopus Moguntinus*, *Epist.* 19, ad *Ethelbaldum regem Anglorum*. Their descendants, under altered fashions, are now recognized in a territory along the Oder and Sprea: *Jablonski*, *Epist.* ap: *Richardson*, *Pilgrimages in Ireland*.

as it was an established custom at that time to bury the wife along with the husband, his Queen refused to reside with him until the period when his vow should be fulfilled.*

But in the East, where human reason seems to be the most disturbed by superstition, and the mental faculties ready to be wound up to the most violent excess of passion, it is an irreversible obligation on the surviving widow to follow her departed husband to the valley of death, if she will not remain and be dishonoured. It is rarely that she needs persuasion, or to be reminded of her duty; though some standing appalled by the terrors of approaching torment, or languishing still for the sweets of life, doubtless become a compulsory sacrifice.† Their common alacrity to mount the pile, and sever themselves from the world, tells how willing they are to perish by the same flames which they themselves shall kindle.

No sooner has the husband breathed his last, than his widow immediately, and without the slightest hesitation, announces her determination to join his soul in paradise. While the spot is selected, and the pile preparing, she is adorning herself as if for a festal day; and comes forth decked in all her jewels and ornaments. A few religious ceremonies

* *Bartholinus Antiquitates Danicæ*, p. 507.

† *Bernier Voyages par les Etats du Grand Mogul*, tom. ii. p. 116.

ensue : she walks around the structure deliberately, with a collected countenance and a firm footstep, and fearlessly ascends its summit. Then taking an affectionate leave of her friends as she distributes her trinkets among them, she herself applies the torch, and clasping her deceased partner in her arms, their ashes mingle together.

But this is not the only fashion of suicide in the East, though it be the more frequent and the most encouraged there ; for sometimes widows voluntarily inter themselves alive with the bodies of their husbands, after similar ceremonies as those which are practised at cremation.*

Shunning this fiery ordeal would incur disgrace, while passing through its torments is believed an unerring guide to eternal felicity, and seals the reputation of the victim. But above all it is held a duty which is owing to the wedded state, insomuch that with rare exceptions concubines are not bound to commit themselves to the flames ; and an amicable competition has been seen between two surviving widows for the privilege of suicide.† The duty of perishing is regarded as so imperious, that blooming widows refuse to listen to the prayers of their desponding kindred, or to escape where power would

* *Ward, View of the History, Religion, and Literature of the Hindoos*, Vol. i. Introd. p. lxxi.—Vol. ii. p. 110.—*Stavorinus, Voyages to the East Indies*, vol. i. p. 451.

† *Diodorus Siculus*, lib. xix. tom. ii. p. 342. *Strabo*, lib. xv. tom. ii. p. 1024, 1041.

shelter them, and where the cooling affections of the aged cease to urge them to self-immolation for love. They put implicit faith in the joys of futurity, and dread the contumely attending evasion of the sacrifice:* which, independently of the warmth of regard for the deceased, are the motives influencing Eastern widows, as well as those of other regions. The principal wife of every chief of the Fejee islands, in the Southern Ocean, is voluntarily strangled when the husband dies. As the Indian widow sometimes burns herself though removing nearer the seat of European governments;† so is the same custom carried along with the others emigrating from their native country. The widow of a chief who died in a different island considered it a breach of duty to outlive him, and in answer to the remonstrances of her friends declared, that the gods of Fejee would punish her, and that by survivance she would expose herself to misery. When their importunities ceased, she lay down by the side of her departed husband, and desired two of her countrymen to terminate her existence: they immediately complied, and she was buried in the same grave with his body.‡ Turning to the king-

* *Maurice*, Indian Antiquities, vol. ii. p. 96, 165. *Forrest*, Voyage to New Guinea, p. 170. *Thorn*, Conquest of Java, p. 323. *Moore*, Hindu Infanticide, p. 71, 72. *Forbes*, Oriental Memoirs, vol. i. p. 279. *Tavernier*, Travels, Part ii. B. 3. ch. 9.

† *Bruce*, Memoirs, p. 252.

‡ *Mariner*, Account of the Tonga Islands, vol. i. p. 341.



doms of Africa, a scene of another kind is displayed for the purpose of self-extermination : where, unlike the calm affliction and patient resignation of the East, surviving widows seem animated by the soul of infuriated demons : Hundreds associated together in the palaces of the sovereign, at the moment he expires commence the most merciless massacre of each other ; and when weary of mutual slaughter, they direct their bloody weapons against themselves.*

But is it not cruel to sanction so horrible a sacrifice of gentle, innocent, and inoffensive beings ? Do not religion, and humanity, and reason, all conspire to bid us root it out from the countries whose soil we tread, and whose laws we dictate ? Even the less enlightened rulers of certain eastern nations have already prohibited this needless destruction of the living ; and although we may wonder at the fortitude which sets the love of parents, children, and kindred aside, to encounter the torments of death, can we credit that compulsion does not often prevail, or that the dread of shame does not conceal internal anguish ? † Does youth or beauty so speedily make up its account with the world, and fly to pain so willingly from pleasure ? Though fortitude can stifle complaint—for to confess our sufferings is unmanly—it cannot abrogate

* *Dalzel*, *History of Dahomy*, var. loc.

† *Bissachere*, *Exposé Statistique du Tunkin*, p. 276.

the terrors of the timid, or always silence the apprehensions of the bold. If some have contemplated the apparatus of death with tranquillity, others have shrunk in horror from the sight; and dissolution of the mental system has preceded destruction of the corporeal frame.—A municipal officer, named Laurenson, being accused at Lyons, was reclaimed by the citizens of his district, and obtained a written certificate from his judges, which he put into his pocket. But in retiring he was seized by mistake, and hurried away with a number of condemned persons to punishment: The certificate having fallen from its place, was found by a soldier, who, quitting the ranks, rushed through the crowd to the presence of the tribunal, procured a definite reprieve, and carried it to the fatal spot. Only an instant remained: of forty victims, thirty-nine had perished, fate reserved Laurenson to conclude the tragedy, and he was already bound to the plank, when the soldier arrived in breathless haste. The unhappy man was freed; but sensation had fled, and reason along with it. Only the last object he had beheld occupied his mind as he recovered. Uttering piteous moans, he believed himself wading in blood, and graves full of his miserable comrades ready to receive him. All the spectators were struck with affright at his cries, while moved by pity at the melancholy spectacle of a man so imminently escaping death being deprived of judgment.*

* *Delandine* les Prisons de Lyons ap: *Nougaret*, tom. iv. p. 114.



Unconquerable vehemence of sorrow, as it prompts surviving kindred to wound themselves, or mutilate their members, even to vie with each other in the extent of suffering,* so may it impel the afflicted to suicide for the loss of those beloved. But surely superstition only could form it into a regular and appointed fashion, to be transmitted through successive ages, and sanctioned as a laudable deed. The ancients affirm that self-immolation originated as a restraint on the integrity of wives, in countries where they had been accustomed treacherously to destroy their husbands, so that the safety of both might become reciprocal and incorporated together. Perhaps it had a very different source, and must be sought in the religious worship or funereal ceremonies of barbarous nations, which shed the blood of the living to appease imaginary deities, or to provide companions for the souls of the dead. Custom defends cruelty : and the man must be intrepid who makes war against superstition. Prejudice cements its fetters. What has more universally overspread the earth with human gore than compulsory sacrifice, for it has watered every region of its surface? But it is gradually abrogated as reason enlightens. We have seen infanticide abolished, and sometimes the date of other remarkable corresponding events is preserved. According to the Spanish missionary Navarette,

* *Wilson, Missionary Voyage of the Ship Duff*, p. 242, 243, 244.

the suicide of widows was practised by the Tartars of the seventeenth century. A man of consideration belonging to that people having died at Peking, in the year 1668, his widow prepared to accompany his remains to the tomb by voluntary immolation. But she had not yet entirely weaned herself from love of the world: she was only seventeen years of age, and a respectable family from which she had sprung were plunged in despair at the prospect of losing her by such a needless sacrifice. They resolved to offer a petition to the emperor, praying him to dispense with its necessity. He not only did so, but prohibited the voluntary suicide of widows among the same nation in future. Thus may despotic authority confer a lasting benefit, where the mild persuasives of the benevolent would be counteracted by the blindness of superstition and folly.*

Husbands have slain themselves from grief at losing their wives; but this is an event infinitely more rare than of wives perishing for the loss of their husbands. Roland the French minister, on learning that his wife had perished by the hands of their persecutors, closed his existence by a dagger on the high-road between Rouen and Paris in November 1793. "Let my remains be respected by the stranger who finds them," said he in a billet,

* *Navarette*, Account of the Empire of China, Book II. chap. 8. The author means that the custom was restricted among the Tartar conquerors of China.



“they are those of a man consecrating his life to utility. Indignation drew me from my retreat, and the moment I discovered that my spouse had been assassinated, I resolved to follow her and abandon a world polluted with crimes.” Not far from the same period, the wife of Francis Claviere, a deputy to the National Convention, followed the suicide of her husband by consoling her children, settling her domestic affairs, and then availing herself of a doze of poison with which she had been provided by a friend.* But the death of the wife of Rabaud St Etienne, who had also perished, was still a more tragical demonstration of despair. She would not be disappointed; for seating herself down on the brink of a well, in such a manner that she might be dashed to the bottom on discharging a weapon aimed at her life, she did the fatal deed. †

§ 6. *Suicide for Friends and Protectors.*—The same passionate regrets inducing suicide for the loss of kindred, have proved the destruction of others between whom the intimate relations of friendship and regard subsisted. In many countries, the slaves and the servants of deceased protectors have voluntarily perished to be laid in a common grave, or resolving to join them in the next life when forcibly separated in the present. Even during the

* Riouffe, *Memoires D'un Detenu*, p. 63, 85.

† Louvet, *Quelques Notices de mes Perils*, p. 263.

monstrous iniquities of the late European troubles, when the fiends of the infernal regions seemed to be let loose, when parents and children, and husbands and wives, were swept into the yawning gulf, youthful female attendants were seen who would not tear themselves from their beloved mistresses, but who would mount the same scaffold to die along with them.* Then was the time when lucid virtues sprung out of atrocious vice—when adversity generated the firmest love—when some who escaped destruction denounced themselves on purpose to perish, and rejoiced in hearing their doom. The annals of Terror record, that in a single city seven daughters, in different families, preserved the lives of their mothers and sisters at the expense of their own.

Anciently, nay in more modern times, it has been known that mankind bound themselves in strict alliance to each other: they vowed to participate mutual fortunes, and voluntarily devoted themselves to destruction when fate overtook either.† Friends linked in friendship, shared a common destiny. In the annals of the north we read of two friends, Asmund and Asvit, who engaged, by reciprocal paction, to accompany each other to the tomb: and one of them having an opportunity of doing so, he merely carried some provisions along with him, to sustain life a little longer. Hading, a king of Denmark,

* *Riouffe*, *Memoires D'un Detenu*, p. 71.

† *Cæsar de Bello Gallico*, lib. iii. cap. 22.—*Lib. vii. cap. 40.*
Strabo, lib. iii. tom. i. p. 251.



on hearing a report of the king of Sweden's death, publicly destroyed himself: Nor should the more singular example of two northern chiefs or kings be omitted, who employed three years in constructing a sepulchre, which one of them entered along with a retinue of twelve persons, for the purpose of committing suicide.*—"If you love me sincerely," said the Roman emperor Otho to his soldiers at the close of his short and troubled reign, "I pray you allow me to die as I wish: do not compel me to live, who am so unwilling; but repair to the victor, and try to make your peace with him."† Retiring from their presence, he fell by his own weapon; but "the prætorian cohorts carried forth his body with tears and lamentations, kissing his hands and the wound. Some of the soldiers killed themselves near his funeral pile, neither from apprehension nor disgust, but from emulation for credit and affection for their prince; and afterwards this kind of death was common at Bebriacum, Placentia, and other encampments."‡

Independently of the poignant affliction endured from the loss of relations, friends, or protectors, no inducement has operated more powerfully than the same principles which led to the immolation of the slave on the tomb of his master, namely, that the suicide might serve the departed in the other world.

* *Saxo Grammaticus*, lib. i. p. 18.—Lib. v. p. 82.

† *Dio*, lib. lxiv. § 14, 15. tom. ii. p. 1058.

‡ *Tacitus Historiæ*, lib. ii. cap. 49.

§ 7. *Suicide from Domestic Infelicity.*—Though mankind, united by kindred and society, are bound to preserve concord, and to dwell in peace and happiness, their opinions are too relaxed on their duties. Instead of a sedulous desire to infuse content, and to reap satisfaction, they are ready to harass their dependent families, and derive a barbarous enjoyment from their vexation.

Suicide from domestic infelicity, perhaps, is far from uncommon; yet it sometimes happens that the master of the establishment is his own destroyer, from chagrin or mortification. Muralt relates, that “an officer belonging to the Tower of London, being much concerned for his wife’s running away with her gallant, flung himself from a balcony into the street, by which his legs were broken. He was carried immediately to be dressed, but before it could be done he took a knife out of his pocket and killed himself.” The same author gives another example of a man of fashion, which, besides domestic infelicity, he ascribes to his desire that his wife should be disappointed of her inheritance, expecting the confiscation of all the property he should leave behind.* However, his conclusions were mistaken.† Some years ago, M. Troussel, an officer of reputation who was in foreign service, dwelt at Ber-

* *Muralt*, Letters, p. 45, 46.

† *Sir Matthew Hale*, *Historia Placitorum Coronæ*, vol. i. p. 413. says of a suicide, “He doth not forfeit his lands, nor his wife’s dower.”



lin in uninterrupted harmony with an amiable partner. Being appointed to command the artillery of an army destined for the invasion of Austria, he remained at Magdeburgh, from whence he dispatched several letters, besides one which was conceived in the following words: But it should be observed, that his wife had previously demonstrated a remarkable partiality for a young stranger arriving at Berlin, which is supposed to have preyed upon his mind; "Being aware that some are averse to occupy the apartment where suicide has been committed, it is in the vestibule that I shall terminate my existence; for I am unwilling to cause any injury to the worthy people with whom I lodge. My body shall be neither stripped nor washed; it shall be locked up during the day, and I request to be interred with the apparel I wear; that as night approaches, four soldiers may carry me to the grave, without any show or parade, and that I shall be buried among the military as deep in the earth as possible." M. Troussel having concluded all his letters, called to the sentinel posted before the door, enquiring the hour of night: "Three has just struck," the sentinel replied; and immediately the neighbourhood being aroused by the report of arms, found the unfortunate officer with a loaded pistol in one hand, and in the other that which had bereft him of life.*

In one instance which came within the author's

* *Thiebault, Souvenirs de mon Sejour a Berlin, tom. iii. p. 125.*

knowledge, a young woman left an orphan in absolute dependence, was received into the family of a benevolent relative, and educated from an early age as a child of his own. She married, apparently from mutual attachment, occupied a respectable sphere in life, and seemed to dwell in comfort : But false conclusions of domestic concerns are often drawn by the undiscerning world : her husband was of a gloomy disposition, and the presence of other relations probably proved an interference with internal peace. While yet in the bloom of youth, this unhappy female forsook her only infant to seek a better state from suicide.

The privacy preserved regarding similar incidents, will the more anxiously prevent the publication of such calamities; from reflecting greater dishonour on the survivors than on the departed, if they come of domestic infelicity.

§ 8. *Suicide from Indignation.*—Sudden indignation, the sense of dishonour, and other sentiments awakened from social relations, are productive of catastrophes equal to those which are consequent on a long train of misery.

But this is a principle which, when restricted within rational limits, is of infinite utility in the affairs of mankind; for those will fly from degradation who know their proper place and duties. It is the sense of dishonour which alike raises the weapon against the person of her who apprehends



the violence of man to her virtue ; or of the woman whose shame, though from human treachery, is betrayed to the world. It is this which induces the suicide of the husband, who feels himself disgraced by the lubricity of his wife ; and of the mother, who cannot survive her daughter's offence. It is the sense of dishonour which arms the commander against himself, whose oversight has lost the day ; of the statesman, who has fallen from his glory ; of the magistrate, who is wounded by indignity : Nay, of the gamester, who cannot redeem his engagements ; or of him from whom capricious fortune has reft his all to plunge in penury.

The sense of dishonour cements the social compact, and strengthens its integrity. It bids us disdain deficiency to ourselves in deficiency to our neighbours, and to spurn at the envious passions which demean us to a level with the vile.

Yet may not the sense of dishonour, so laudable in its proper exercise and acceptation, be carried to an extent of which the rational can hardly approve ? The wicked are not in our keeping : they ~~may~~ **over-**power us by their strength, they may contrive to steal indignities upon us, treacherously to waylay our steps, and brand our fairest name with calumny. But are we to take vengeance on ourselves, or hold that we are accountable for the deed that is another's, seeing our own actions only are within our controul ?* It seems as if we were willing that a fit of impatience should hurry us from the world.

* *Epicletus Enchiridion*, § 1.

Two young nobles of Japan, Tavernier says, having jostled each other, the most passionate desired to have instant revenge by duel, which the other declined until a more convenient opportunity, which was then appointed. The challenger consequently repaired to the spot, and, having waited some time for his adversary, was so poignantly stung by the affront put upon him, as he conceived, that he killed himself. However, the other immediately arrived, and after expressing much surprise that his word had been doubted, he declared that he would seal his promise with his blood; and he also committed suicide.* If we are to credit the descriptions of that remote country, suicide seems to be as much encouraged as repressed; for not only is there a sect of philosophers regarding it as heroic and very commendable when the single honourable means of evading a shameful death, or to be preserved from falling into the hands of a victorious enemy:† but he who commits suicide is anxious to prove to his friends that he has died honourably.‡ Thus is so needless a waste of life sanctioned, and so much fuel added to the human passions. It has been alleged, that the North American Indians are keenly alive to an affront; that it is by no means rare for females of tender

* *Tavernier*, Relation of Japan, p. 5.

† *Kœmpfer*, History of Japan, p. 250.

‡ *Golownin*, Narrative, vol. ii. p. 282.

age to drown themselves on a slight reprimand from their mothers, and this without any passionate exclamations, or saying more than "You shall no longer have a daughter!"

The sense of dishonour, combined with religious prejudices, is carried to such an unreasonable excess in some parts of the East, that men of rank conceive themselves disgraced by simple exposure of the countenance of the females of their family; and some would permit themselves to perish of hunger rather than partake of food from the same vessel which had served another cast or religious sect of different tenets. An immense army was marched to a sanctified stream about the year 1792, that the General might therein purify himself from the contamination of having ate with a Bramin, who had an amour with another's wife of lower rank.* A noble of Hindostan giving an account of an engagement from which he escaped when hard pressed by an enemy, continues, "Upon which I leaped from my horse, and seizing my wife and daughter by each hand, rushed with them into

* *Moore*, Narrative of the Operations of Captain Little's Detachment, p. 166: "Happier ten thousand times would it have been had he put arsenic into their victuals, for then such only as had eaten of it would have felt the bad effects; whereas now so quickly a contamination of this kind spreads, not only the whole mass, but all with whom the members had held intercourse were defiled." Vide *Buchanan*, Journey from Madras, vol. ii. p. 409.

the rivulet up to their waists, and covered the rest of their persons with a cloth, drawing my sword to defend them with my life; and luckily for my honour their faces were not seen by the eyes of strangers."*

But it is chiefly in some extreme dilemma, or amidst desperate circumstances, that the utmost violence of the passions is developed, and spreads like an infectious malady. Who has ever seen the same scenes displayed in repose, as amidst fire and shipwreck, and in the heat of battle? Who could credit that the same soul softened by the murmurings of the brook, stilled by the serenity of silent nature, or courting the groves and the woodlands, could be maddened with ambition, or seek for glory amidst carnage and desolation?

When the olive branch is planted here, the torch of discord is kindled there, and the standard of war unfurled. For the earth must ever teem with dissension, rousing the dormant passions, together with all the personal energies of which mankind are capable. The shame, the disgrace, and the danger of being overpowered by an enemy, however, are scarcely surpassed by the horror of contamination from being touched by sacrilegious hands. Among the bravest, from whom the hopes of victory have fled, and whom fortune has deserted, the sullen broodings of despondence are the most ominous, for their own

* *Eradut Khan*, *Memoirs of the Mogul Empire*, p. 72.



and the destruction of their dependents. In some parts of Hindostan, if a man of rank, beset by an irresistible enemy, finds that the honour of his family is not to be ensured on capitulation, he assumes a certain external symbol of despair, and retiring to the inner apartments, the whole of the females are involved in common destruction, or themselves commit suicide.* Sometimes mothers and children are cruelly massacred by a trusty band chosen by the master, and especially to preserve them from the contamination of Europeans. Sometimes, when there is no other victim, the raging chief takes vengeance on himself, in the blindness of the superstitious prejudices debasing his mind. In the year 1749, when the British captured the fort of Devicottah in India, a native officer of high rank was found lying desperately wounded on the ground. He was removed, and humanely attended; but, with sullen obstinacy, he refused all proffered aid, nor would he submit to the surgical operations essential for his cure until observing that compulsion would be used: and he was no sooner left alone than he attempted to put an end to his existence. Therefore he was narrowly watched; and to preserve him undisturbed by the operations then carrying on, he was conveyed to a thatched hut at some distance, where for several days he behaved with such composure that his keepers retired, believing him asleep in the night. The Indian, how-

* *Franklin, Military Memoirs of Mr George Thomas, p. 181.*

ever, instead of appreciating the care of his benefactors, felt that they had done him a mortal injury. His purity was indelibly sullied by contact with the means which the Europeans had employed in ministering to his wants. When his keepers had retired and had reached some distance, he crept to a corner of the hut, and setting fire to the thatch, it instantly kindled into a blaze, while he perished according to his wish in the flames.*

The biographer of suicides gives a melancholy example of the prejudices of education, where a young female devotee, wrapt up in superstition, became a votary of the immaculate Saint Catherine. A stranger, youthful like herself, had made an impression on her affections, which she had not attempted, in the innocence of her heart, to resist. But having dropped certain expressions which allowed her to call the fervour of his piety in question, she was struck with such inconceivable horror at being contaminated by the touch of a heretic, that she endeavoured to atone to Heaven for it by becoming her own destroyer. So did this poor deluded being plunge into eternity, without considering whether she was not about to commit an offence of a far deeper die than having yielded to the momentary impulse of mortal enthusiasm.†

It is very shocking to think that mankind are so

* *Orme*, Military Transactions in Indostan, vol. i. p. 120. vol. ii. p. 254.

† *Spiess*, Biography of Suicides, No. 89.



absurd as to believe that contact of living beings spreads a deleterious poison because professing certain opinions or from having sprung of a certain race, that they suffer such contamination as is expiable only by depriving themselves of life. Can it be credited that the rage of intolerance and superstition has been so great in England, that persons of one sect were forbidden to nurse the children of another, to dwell in the same house, or even to eat together;* that they have been the objects of torture and persecution, and compelled to chuse a voluntary death as the least of the real evils presented to them? None but our own actions, indeed, are in our own custody, and circumstances inevitable may betray the purest into an equivocal condition, or even into a predicament which covers them with shame. These are the accidents of life and of fortune, against which nothing can ensure. If the Eastern female feels degradation merely because her head is uncovered in the sight of men, or the noble dread disgrace by simple exposure of the face of his wife or daughter, what will not delicacy, strengthened by resolution, undertake to wipe out the stain of dishonour?

Some take revenge on the author of their inju-

* *Tovey*, *Anglia Judaica*, p. 118, quotes an order by Henry III. in council, containing a clause, "*Quod nulla nutrix Christiana de cetero lactet aut nutriat puerum alicujus Judæi nec aliquis Christianus vel Christiana serviat alicui Judæo vel Judææ, nec cum ipsis comedat, vel in domo suo commoretur.*"

ries: those who cannot reach him, take vengeance on themselves, though they must be unconscious of meriting reproach. From what was it unless the most refined sense of honour that Lucretia died, if beyond the shafts of calumny? It was not when surprising her in the night, because her betrayer exclaimed, "Be silent—my sword is in my hand—if you speak you perish!" that she was conquered: But when he threatened, after taking her own life, to kill a slave, and lay him by her side, that she might seem to have been slain in adultery, the terror of shame overcame her. Nevertheless, she felt herself unfit to survive when thus dishonoured.*

Chiomara, a courageous Asiatic female, who had been made prisoner by an enemy, revenged herself on the author of her dishonour like Timoclea, instead of sinking under the disgrace. But few have testified such masculine resolution, and they have fallen in their weakness.†—The Baroness de Salis

* *Livy*, lib. i. cap. 58. Historians and moralists are compelled to illustrate their principles by facts. But it has appeared extraordinary to the author that such subjects as the suicide of Lucretia, the adventure of Joseph and Potiphar's wife, the circumstances of Lot and his daughters, or the confusion of the woman taken in adultery, should be so often brought under the pencil of the artist for common observation. Their excellence can be estimated only by the most intelligible narrative of what has given birth to them.

† *Sextus Aurelius Victor de Viris Illustribus*, cap. 55, affirms, that Chiomara delivered the offender to be put to death. Others observe, that when escorted to Greece, she gave a signal for his



is called a modern Lucretia, because she committed suicide in despair, from having been dishonoured by the violence of one of the later kings of France.*

Many unfortunate females have escaped threatened dishonour by the cruel alternative of suicide, forgetting that impurity can reside only in the mind, and that violence to the person does not corrupt the soul. Thus Sophronia, a Roman lady, wife to the prefect of the city, being called on to attend the Emperor Maxentius, and apprized that her virtue lay in danger, retired to her chamber, and preserved it by a voluntary death.† Under similar apprehensions we read, that in the days of persecution during the earlier ages of Christianity, Pelagia, a virgin of fifteen, drowned herself at Antioch. Putting on the apparel suitable for a nuptial ceremony, she advanced to a river, accompanied by her mother and her sisters. "What should we dread!" they cried, "behold the stream, and who shall forbid our baptism? Let the water which opens the heavens, shelters the weak, and disguises death, receive us! Let the same constancy, the same lot, and the same sepulture be ours!" Then joining hands, they reached the middle of the

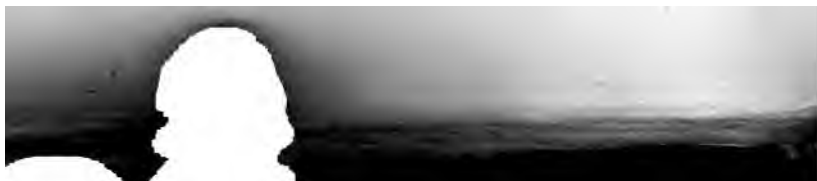
assassination as she parted from him. *Plutarch de Claris Mulieribus* says, Polybius had seen her in the town of Sardis, and had found her a woman of great courage and good understanding.

* *Richelieu Memoires*, tom. ix. cap. 20. p. 353. This incident is referred to the more advanced years of Louis XV.

† *Eusebius Historia Ecclesiastica*, lib. viii. cap. 14.

flood.* Later history is more barren of examples : indeed such violent extremities may be ascribed to the joint sensations of apprehended dishonour and anxiety to inherit a crown of martyrdom, which in their operation effect that delirium which banishes rationality. They have received the highest commendation from the fathers of the church as the heroism of martyrs, though at this day they would be scarcely thought short of frenzy. The older historians of Europe affirm, that when Attila conquered the city of Aquileia in the year 452, a lady named Digna, of noble birth and distinguished beauty, whose abode was close to the walls, leapt into the river which they overhung to preserve her chastity. Repeated examples of personal disfigurement from the like motives are also to be found in their works. We do not know that many recent instances of such delicate apprehensions can be quoted : first, because the older authors certainly were occupied much more than modern historians

* *Ambrose de Virginibus*, cap. vii. § 33—35. The account of this event is written somewhat differently by *Chrysostom*, *Homiliæ de Sancta Pelagia*. Opera, tom. ii. p. 585. There seems to be some confusion in the ecclesiastical writers regarding the suicide of Pelagia. *Eusebius* speaks first of a mother and two daughters, whose names are given by Chrysostom as Domnina, Berenice, and Prosdoce, who threw themselves into the river; and then of two sisters whom the worshippers of demons ordered to be thrown into the sea, lib. viii. cap. 12. *Cedrenus*, *Compendium Historiarum*, tom. i. p. 268. places the suicide "of the wife and two daughters of Adanctus," in the eleventh year of the reign of Dioclesian.



with virtues deemed illustrious, and the embellishment of human nature: secondly, because that sounder philosophy, teaching self-acquittal of blame which is not our own act, perhaps is in greater observance.

Nevertheless, men apparently of vigorous minds, and in the full possession of all their faculties, have been so cruelly wounded by indignities, that they could never again encounter the light of day. In the course of the French revolution, Adrian Tellier, a civil officer of distinction, was employed by the National Convention to promote the supply of grain at Chartres in 1795. His presence, however, was productive of different consequences. The populace having revolted, mounted him ignominiously on an ass, and compelled his signature of an edict regarding the price of bread, and thus degraded, obliged him to proclaim it in the market-place. Returning to his lodgings, he wrote to the magistrates of the town, and to the committees of the government, excusing what he had done as an act of compulsion, declaring that he could not survive the indignity he had suffered. "I depart from life," said he, "transmitting to my children the same unsullied probity which I inherited from my respectable father:" and immediately afterwards he put a period to his existence.* Near to the restoration of the monarchical government, a soldier having failed in some part of

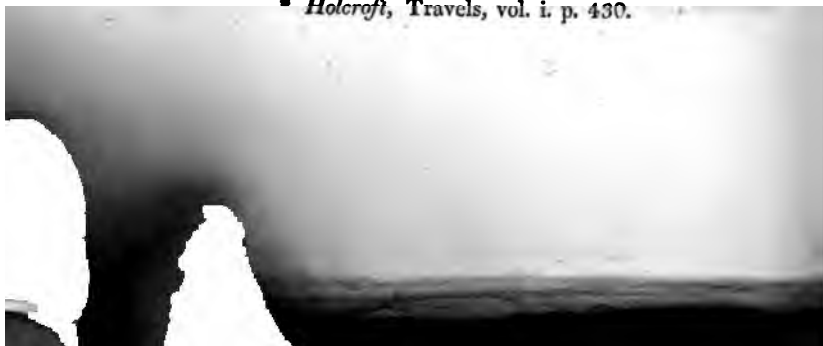
* The official reporters to the Convention of this incident very anxiously conceal the nature of the indignities put upon the national representative.

his exercise on the parade in the court of the Thuilleries, was dismissed from the ranks, and after a reprimand acquainted that he should never have the honour of again appearing before the first consul—a penalty he considered so degrading, that he shot himself.*

Those who embark in the military service are understood to possess more refined sentiments on the point of honour than are expected from the ordinary mass of society, on which account they must be the more careful to preserve their station in public opinion. Nor is this unaccompanied by advantages. We see that men, even in the ranks of the British armies, whose conduct in the field has been rewarded by medals, sedulously avoid whatever would disparage this badge of their intrinsic merit.

In the year 1792, when the European nations becoming appalled by the enormities of revolutionary France, Verdun was invested, on a declaration of war by Prussia. The town was strong, and the republican commander, Colonel Beaurepaire, a veteran who had seen the service of forty years, encouraged the garrison to maintain its defence. But the magistrates, alarmed by the sight of 60,000 Prussians on the hills, and the bomb-shells already bursting in their streets, proposing to capitulate, he hastened to the scene of their deliberation, where he warmly opposed the surrender. His arguments proved ineffectual, however; therefore finding them resolved on what

* *Holcroft, Travels, vol. i. p. 430.*



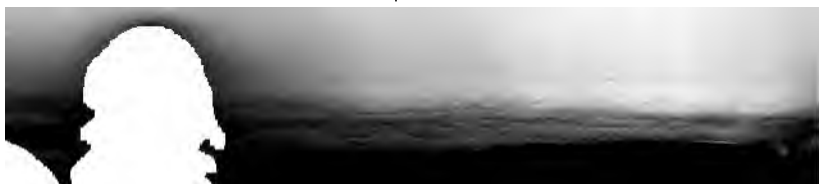
he concluded a disgraceful measure, "like Cato, his indignation, the passion of great souls, had overcome every other sentiment;" he drew a pistol from his pocket, and shot himself in full council.*

Fortunately for the tranquillity of the world, we are not all endowed with equal sensibility of wrongs. Were such vehemence of anger, or so delicate a sense of dishonour, frequently to animate mankind, it would disturb the organization of society. Threatened evils generally appear harder to be borne than they are felt when actually brought to the test of experience; whence that fortitude which might be opposed to them, is previously undermined and dissipated. Suicide, indeed, is often the result of calm deliberation, and sometimes follows the annunciation of its design; but the personal violence which mankind offer to themselves is undoubtedly, in many instances, also the result of the tumult or perturbation of the mind, which prohibits the due exercise of reason. Perhaps the losing gamester, who takes his own life from inability to fulfil his engagements, would spare it could he conquer his early feelings, and put his case entirely on fortune. Lucretia has been denied that approbation which she hoped to merit: Can it be questioned, that similar indignities, which never come to light, are a thousand times inflicted wherever the strength and opportunities of

* *Williams*, *Letters from France*, vol. iii. p. 154.—*Moore*, *Journal*, vol. i. p. 396; vol. ii. p. 390.—There is a discrepancy in the account of these two authors as to the place of his suicide. But it certainly was public, therefore the latter is right.

the abandoned preponderate? Yet thousands of years, and thousands of millions of persons, hardly illustrate the same violence of passion attending the sense of dishonour. But the acuteness of human sensibilities is most unequal. The simple name of degradation is intolerable to some men. Others not only can tamely brook insult, but can stoop to unworthy actions. Yet if scorn be in itself insupportable, we shall not wonder at the excesses of which mortals are capable in endeavouring to screen themselves from its poignancy. The more callous we become, certainly it tends the more to our personal preservation; though probably it lowers the impressions of virtue. Nevertheless, the substitution of other sensations than those so keenly aroused by injury as effectually restrains their disastrous issue, as if the sufferer were invested with blunter feelings. Though the gallant soldier be distracted at the first discovery of wicked calumnies spread to asperse his name, he is soon borne up by the thirst of vengeance, or his hopes to prove their falsehood. But what defence has the timid female, who finds her reputation basely sullied, except in human generosity to avenge her wounded sensibilities?

§ 9. *Suicide from the sense of inferiority.*—Pride and vanity whisper illustrious notions of ourselves, and there is scarcely any external flattery too gross for our self-love to reject and despise. Confidence buoys us up in the belief of properties which we neither possess, nor are capable of attaining;



and thence is the means of fostering imperfections. The vehemence of self-love must be necessarily the source of every man's errors; for he who loves is blind in respect to the object of his admiration.* But a sense of self-unworthiness may also originate in the gloomy mind of those who never have been deficient in duty; like him in Scripture who, spite of having obeyed the divine ordinances from his youth, still doubted his chance of penetrating the gates of Heaven. Forgetting that the pleasures of the world have been devised for enjoyment, and that the delicacies of sense and the perceptions of the soul have been gifted on purpose to relish them, weak, vain, and ignorant devotees think of self-punishment as a cure for their defects, as if they alone had been entitled to come in a state of perfection from the hand of the Creator. Frequently belief in self-unworthiness is a prelude to decided insanity. Mankind, besides this spiritual affection, are sometimes liable to that regarding temporal matters, which wounds them with painful consciousness of inferiority on a comparison with their fellows. The ancients fable a soothsayer, who having found some other augur of superior skill and pretensions to himself, died of mortification.† Among the moderns, various narratives are preserved of rivals for excellence in the arts, having

* *Plato de Legibus*, lib. v.

† *Strabo*, lib. xiv. has enumerated several opinions on this subject preceding his own time, tom. ii. p. 951.

had their imperfections forced on their notice by illiberal criticism, or by their own observation, so as to embitter their whole existence. Many persons addicted to literature, after once offering favourite opinions to the public, and having been warned of their precipitation, never could resolve to adventure again. Verrochio, a painter, is said to have been so sensible of the inferiority of his own figures to one which his pupil Leonardo de Vinci had executed by his directions, that he ceased attempting further prosecution of his art. Another painter, Francia, a Bolognese, entertained an ardent desire to see the works of the celebrated Raphael, for whom he entertained high esteem, but his advanced age precluded him from undertaking a journey to Rome for that purpose. A correspondence, however, commenced between them, and Raphael having completed a work for the church of Bologna, transmitted it to the care of Francia. The artist was overjoyed. But beginning to study this masterpiece attentively, its perfections were gradually unfolded before him; and now discovering the disparity of his own conceptions and execution, he found Raphael at the summit of excellence, while he had himself only reached mediocrity. Despondency took possession of his mind, and he fell a victim to his sense of inferiority.*

* *Vasari Vite di Pittori*, tom. iii. p. 409. edit. 1647. The author refers this incident to the year 1518,

It is said that during the siege of Vienna in 1683, a certain clergyman of great reputation in Amsterdam assuming the privilege of vaticination, preached that the city would be taken by the Turks. But he was so deeply mortified by his want of foresight when it was relieved by John Sobieski, that he died of grief. "It was not that he wished, as Drabicius would have done, that the Turks might make a progress in Germany, but it grieved him to be mistaken."* At an earlier period, when the French leaguings with the northern inhabitants of this island, waged war with England, they found prophecies current against themselves. Among their prisoners was one of the most zealous prophets, who styled himself a priest, fierce, haughty, and like a ruffian was ready to quarrel on all occasions with those that maintained him. After vaunting his confidence in vaticination, he discovered its fallacy, that quite the reverse of what was predicted came to pass, which affected him in such a manner that he resolved to deprive himself of life. No intreaties thenceforward could prevail on him to taste meat or drink: he would speak no more, but lying down on the ground he starved himself to death.† Impostors are commonly more attached to the world, that they may be the better of their imposture: if every soothsayer had been as much mortified as the two preceding, many would have perished.

* Bayle, Dictionary, voce Mahomet, note G. G.

† Beague, History of the Campaigns 1548-9, p. 102.

ed : but many having spoke with greater arrogance than sincerity, no evil has befallen them.

Pausanias, in his description of Greece, mentions a statue erected to Timanthes, who had been victor in some of the games. He adds, that he heard he had abstained from athletic exercises, on account of his age : yet, to preserve his vigour, accustomed himself daily to bend a bow of great strength. " But having gone from home, his ordinary exercise was interrupted ; and on attempting to resume it when returning, he found that he had not power to bend the bow. Therefore he constructed a funeral pile, and burnt himself alive : an action," continues Pausanias, " which, in my opinion, should be rather called insanity, than what merited commendation."*

An intimate relation may be figured between suicide from shame, the sense of dishonour, or indignation, and that which results from conscious inferiority.

§ 10. *Suicide to escape Trial and Punishment.*—Mankind who could read in the next moment of futurity, a more terrible fate awaiting them, have defeated it in forming the most numerous and the most sanguinary class of suicides. First, it consists of those individuals who have to dread the offended laws, or private enemies : Secondly, of those who, menaced by a public foe, despair of mercy. The

* *Pausanias*, lib. vi. cap. 8.



latter, indeed, can be better illustrated from the records of ancient lore, though it be not eradicated in the latest times; for enemies always have been merciless when they had nothing to dread for themselves or their friends in retaliation. But the suicides of the present order have been enlarged by another motive independently of self-destruction, namely, the preservation of their property to their relatives if they died in anticipation of the hand of the executioner.

Recent history proves how often there was only a single step between the tribunal and the scaffold: therefore has suicide been such a frequent resource to escape an ignominious sentence, or to be preserved from execution. Suspicion equals confirmation in the eye of prejudice: the rude and the refined are alike enslaved. Suicide is even committed by the ignorant objects suspected of witchcraft in Greenland, who "frequently throw themselves into the sea, that they may not be torn piecemeal, and become a prey to the ravens." *

During the despotic reign of some of the Roman emperors, the accused, in dread of conviction, would anticipate sentence by suicide, and save his property from confiscation, for his inoffensive family; and this cost many lives. But avarice grows greedy with hope, and it became so ingenious that the ex-

* *Crantz*, History of Greenland, Book iii. chap. 4. § 7. This seems allusive to women only.

pedient was disappointed. Vibulenus Agrippa, a Roman knight, swallowed poison in the presence of his accusers: nevertheless, he was carried to prison and strangled, after having actually expired, to obtain the confiscation of his goods by a mock execution. Tacitus, in alluding to the constant destruction at Rome under Nero, observes, that "Pomponius Labeo, who, as already mentioned, had been governor of Moesia, opened his own veins, and Paxea his wife followed his example. Dread of the executioner occasioned many deaths of this kind. The property of persons condemned was forfeited, and they were denied the rites of sepulture: but the bodies of those who perished thus were interred, and their testaments remained effectual. Such was the reward of their precipitation."*

But the reign of terror is uniform in its operation throughout æras and regions; for time and space are none of its boundaries. Wherever its gigantic form haunts the troubled visions of mankind, and persecutes their peace, a wild tumult of frenzied rashness and inconsistency is fated to disturb their reason. The innocent have no protection, the guilty no certain punishment: every hour is pregnant with some momentous crisis, and to either equally: the zealot has gathered the faggots which consumed himself: the worst, who have sharpened weapons against the best, have an equal chance, though it

* *Tacitus Annales*, lib. vi. cap. 29, 40.

may be postponed, of falling under their edge. Regardless of the victims which it thirsts to destroy, terror reigns only in destruction. The most atrocious periods of Roman history never exceeded the most tranquil stages of the French revolution, whose mighty projects seemed to be submerged in the ocean of blood which was spilt by its cruelty. There the raging appetite of one, or of a few, had to be sated: here infuriated millions spread desolation. Every leader was a persecutor, and the persecuted in his turn: the proscriber only lived to be proscribed. We have travelled to other countries, we have ransacked the stores of antiquity, and exhausted the treasures of the learned in illustrating the nature of man. Have not we been engaged in a work of supererogation, when the magazine of mental fires burst into a blaze so near beside us, and poured forth all the maddened passions tormenting placidity? While France, in specious guise, endeavoured to impose the name of Liberty and Equality, she was rending her own bowels in torture, groaning in bonds and slavery under a throng of despots: and the crimes of the shortest period rivalled the wickedness of many long centuries. The prisons overflowed with the objects of private animosity, or political aversion, under the character of state delinquents: accusation pressed on accusation; for spies and informers, invited to the charge, were prompted in their testimony; and so was accusation the certain precursor of death.

Every prisoner received his indictment at night: he was led to the tribunal in the morning, and dragged to the scaffold before the sun went down. Acquittal was hopeless to the innocent; to escape miraculous; and all on entering the fatal porch, could foresee the doom awaiting them. Not only were the soldier, the statesman, the citizen, and those who had consecrated their lives to the duties of religion, crowded together in numbers, and hurried forth to sacrifice; "but the most beautiful, the youngest, and the most interesting women, fell promiscuously into this enormous gulf, from which they were withdrawn by dozens to inundate the scaffold with their blood." Shall we wonder if despondence took possession of the virtuous at such a horrid crisis, broke the heart with sorrow, and armed the weak with weapons,—that an æra arose prolific in suicide!

Francis Claviere, the son of a citizen of Geneva, after having ardently promoted the overthrow of the established government, was nominated manager of the public contributions in the year 1792. Fidelity in the offices of the commonwealth obtained no pledge for security, and Claviere being denounced to the revolutionary tribunal, was confined in the Conciergerie at Paris. Having received his charge, he carried a fellow-prisoner apart, and by the glimmering of a lamp perusing the list of witnesses, found his most inveterate enemies at their head. "They are assassins," he cried,

“ but I shall preserve myself from their fury.” Then began a calm and rational conversation on the means of quitting life: he drew a weapon deliberately across his breast, and pointed out the spot where it would surely convey a mortal blow. He forsook his companion, and retiring to his own cell, immediately fell by suicide. This desperate action proved a thunderbolt to his wife, whose tragical fate has been already told,—convincing traits of freedom in a land of liberty!* But the wretched prisoners had to dread a more terrible issue than being put on their defence, and publicly maintaining their tenets with their blood; for the ferocious chiefs of anarchy devised a secret plot to be divested of such formalities by a general massacre of the whole while they were most defenceless: and the perpetration of this dark iniquity covered its authors with eternal shame, as it filled the kingdom with mourning. Prophetic warnings seemed to announce the tragedy; for Colonel Chantereine, at the moment when his fellow-unfortunates were about to repair to their common repast, pierced himself with three deadly wounds, exclaiming, “ We are all destined to be massacred!—my God, I hasten towards thee!”†

Some carried poison, others sought sharp-pointed weapons: some gave an exit to life by their veins, others dashed themselves from the heights in des-

* *Riouffe* *Memoires d'un Detenu*, p. 63, 85.

† *Saint Meard* ap: *Nougaret*, tom. i. p. 2.

pair. There were prisoners who would not await their trial, prisoners who would not await their sentence; who anticipated arrest, or defeated execution.

The Marquis de Cordorcet, who had been a distinguished actor in the revolution, specially hostile to royalty, and who, after denying the right of trying him, urged the immediate death of the king, fell under proscription in his turn. He evaded his enemies, still fiercer republicans than himself, by flight, returned, and dwelt nine months in precarious concealment. His asylum being threatened with a domiciliary visit, he fled again, though not to safety; for he was speedily arrested, and committed to a dungeon. Condorcet had always secreted poison about his person, by the aid of which he escaped his impending fate before the succeeding dawn. This was no rare precaution; yet several, rather than perish privately, cast their lethal dose aside, that they might accompany their comrades in a public death.

At a certain period, the prisoners, both male and female, were rigorously searched for iron instruments, and nothing left behind that could inflict a wound.* But Dufriche Valazé, one of the

* *Nougaret*, tom. iii. p. 62, relates, that an unfortunate tradesman, confined above a year, had the address to preserve a razor from the rapacity of the jailors, which made his fortune in officiating on his fellow-sufferers. He refused 100 crowns for it.

deputies to the Convention, who fell along with the overthrow of his party in October 1793, concealed a poinard under his cloak, with which, in presence of the tribunal itself, he pierced his breast on hearing sentence pronounced against him, and dropped down lifeless at the same moment. In June 1795, other six deputies, in retiring from condemnation, secretly passed their weapons from hand to hand; three fell by mortal wounds; three expiring, were hurried straightway to execution.* Then were the days when no one knew that he should wake to security without the walls of the prison, or that he should wake to life within them,—when the prisons were too small for the accused, the chariots too few to carry them to the scaffold, and the murderous axe of the revolutionary despots too slow in extermination.

Shall we be surprised if many preferred a private death to a public one, or if many who sought it were disappointed?

But France is not the only country where mankind have aimed at their own lives to escape trial or sentence; for the dread of exposure by an ignominious fate, or horror at the rude grasp of the executioner, has often been calmed by suicide in Britain. Many examples could point out those accused of great, or even of petty and more ignoble crimes, in every

* They had only a pair of old scissors and two knives, with which they successively pierced themselves in descending the stair from the tribunal.

nation taking vengeance on themselves, after having ascertained their doom;* and some would shew that they did not await so long. The infection of that political epidemic, which lately ravaged the continent of Europe, spread its delirium to the British islands, disturbing the order, the peace, and the safety of their inhabitants. But a vigorous arm opposed its progress, and potent remedies dispelled the fever. In the year 1795, a clergyman of Ireland, otherwise of reputable character, was accused at Dublin of treasonable purposes; for among the natives of that kingdom, there is a constitutional ferment always in effervescence. He had numerous friends and defenders, however, who partook of the same principles, from esteeming them true and lawful; some owing to disgusts or severities, others from internal conviction. The charges being proved, the culprit was brought up for judgment; but he was hardly present, when, beginning to foam at the mouth, he staggered, and immediately fell lifeless before the

* *Etoile Journal*, tom. i. p. 69. Baldwin, one of the conspirators against the Duc d'Alençon in 1582, being detected, and dreading the consequences of trial, committed suicide.—*Williams*, *Letters from France*, vol. iii. p. 165. A youth at Verdun rushed from the ranks, full of indignation at the surrender of the place in 1792, and attempted to assassinate his officer. He was instantly seized for punishment. "However, he deceived the senate, by precipitating himself into the river that flowed beneath, where he was drowned before any unwelcome assistance could be afforded him." A respectable person in Scotland, condemned for shooting the Earl of Eglinton with a fowling piece of which that nobleman attempted to deprive him, committed suicide immediately after his sentence, in 1770.

court, which had assembled to pronounce his sentence. An immoderate dose of poison preserved him from public punishment. How many impressive examples incessantly betray the hazard inseparable from political frenzy; that although the most ardent to shake a government imperfect in itself, succeed in overthrowing those whom they hold their enemies, they can vaunt only a fugitive fortune! Merely seeking to occupy their place, but ignorant of its due vocations, the eminence they gain makes them giddy: they raise an host of foes, even more rancorous than they themselves had proved; they totter, and in their proper turn they fall, leaving the state a prey to new convulsions.

A Corsican named Histria, a near relative of the late Napoleon Bonaparte, is said to have insulted a young female, Annette La Vigne, at Lyons, in the year 1796, which deeply resenting, she arrayed herself in man's apparel, and demanded satisfaction for it. On his refusal she wounded him, and he was carried to the hospital, where he fell under the weapon of an unknown assassin, who procured an introduction by pretexts of enquiring after his health. Annette was believed the guilty person; but, after a military commission had been appointed to try the fact, Francis de Chataigne, whom she had married in the interval, accusing himself of the offence, he suffered death for it, and she was released. No sooner did Annette discover his cruel fate, than she found means to present herself before the military commission, when she shot the presi-

dent through the head with one pistol, and took her own life at the same moment with another;—a desperate and unequalled vengeance. The city deplored the tragedy bereaving her of existence; but the president found no commiseration, because the innocence of De Chataigne was well known, and that he had sacrificed himself from the ardour of affection for his wife.

The terror of a public enemy, the torments threatened from their hands, and the dread of indignity, which the cruel victor was ready to offer of old to the fallen, often rendered a voluntary death the most welcome refuge to the vanquished. Discord, that scourge of mankind, is ever ready to let loose the baser passions of the mind, and as if war, which, like pestilence or famine demanding many victims, were not to be sated with the mutual carnage of the combatants, those who can resist no longer must turn their weapons against themselves. “When the battle went sore against Saul, he called to his armour-bearer, draw thy sword and thrust me through therewith, lest the uncircumcised come and thrust me through and abuse me. But his armour-bearer would not; therefore Saul took a sword and fell upon it.”

To attempt enumerating the suicides from this occasion would be as endless as endeavouring to number the calamities of war; for mankind, beset by inexorable foes, have accounted it a lesser evil to perish by their own hands, than to linger under the hands of others, or await extermination by fire

or famine. The pressure of intolerable distresses, the uncertainty of relief, and fate inevitable, have closed in the same catastrophe. During the siege of Rome by the Goths, a certain Roman, surrounded by his five children, imploring him for food, desired them to accompany him to the bridge across the Tiber. "Neither uttering any complaint, nor betraying any signs of anguish, he covered his face with his robe, and leapt amidst the flood in their presence, and in the sight of other Romans."* During the wars disturbing the peace of Italy in the sixteenth century, Montaigne declares he heard his father affirm that twenty-five heads of families committed suicide in a week.† It is not long since the ignorant natives of Kamtschatka, retreating to their fastnesses, have destroyed their wives and children in despair, have leaped from the rocks into the sea, or, awaiting the arrival of their assailants, rushed forth on their weapons.‡

If the Jews dreaded the Romans, there is no country wherein they have suffered a harder fate than in England, from the cruel and illiberal prejudices always excited against them. Pronouncing their name was a signal even in times of profound peace for pillage and oppression, which the worst of the rabble might commit on the worthiest, whom

* *Procopius de Bello Getico*, lib. ii. cap. 20.—Lib. iii. cap. 17.

† *Montaigne Essais*, liv. i. chap. 40.

‡ Krascheninnikow, *History of Kamtschatka* by Grieve, p. 201. An entire party, excepting a single girl, who was accidentally preserved, perished thus in 1740.

the government had not plundered beforehand. Five hundred and fifty Jews, dreading the assaults of the populace, took refuge on one occasion in York castle, along with their wives and children. They refused to surrender; but they offered an ample largess to their savage assailants to redeem their lives. The thirst of cruelty, however, predominated over the desire for rapine, and the prisoners pleaded in vain. "Then one of them arose who was skilled in their laws, saying, 'Israelites, listen to my counsel. It is better that we should die for our law, for so the law commands, than to fall into the hands of our enemies!' The whole around him assented, and taking weapons, they first destroyed their wives, their sons and daughters, and their domestics, throwing them over the walls. Next, retreating within the palace, they set fire to it, and were there consumed themselves."* But the misfortunes, the valour, and the desperation of that unhappy and persecuted people, are not to be paralleled of any other nation; and never did greater multitudes devote themselves to voluntary destruction than during their wars with the Romans, which terminated with the capture of Jerusalem. They not only encountered intolerable privations, but their courage remained undaunted to the last; and the magnanimity of their sentiments shone beyond example. "We revolted from the Romans," said Eleazar to his garrison, "with great pretensions to courage;

* *Matthæus Paris Historia Major*, p. 131, ad an. 1190.

and when they invited us to preserve ourselves, we would not comply with them. Who will not therefore believe that they will be certainly enraged at us, in case they can take us alive?" . . . "But certainly our hands are still at liberty, and have a sword in them: Let them then be subservient to us in our glorious design: let us die before we become slaves under our enemies, and let us go out of the world, together with our children and our wives, in a state of freedom!" By such and similar speeches did the Jewish commanders inspire their soldiers against their persecutors, and animate each other to the most sanguinary suicide. Their apprehensions were too just of the barbarity of their merciless victors; for as the Canadian savage devotes the bravest of his captives to the most excruciating torments, so did the most magnanimous perish, after fashions at which humanity shudders. "And as to those who are now under the Romans, who would not pity their condition? and who would not hasten to die before he would suffer the same miseries with them? Some have been put to the rack, and tortured with fire and whippings. Some have been half-devoured by wild beasts, and yet have been reserved alive to be devoured by them a second time, in order to afford laughter and sport to our enemies. Such of those as survive ought to be looked on as the most miserable, who, being so desirous of death, could not come at it."* Words cannot de-

* *Josephus Bellum Judaicum*, lib. vii. cap. 8.

scribe, nor can imagination figure, the shame and indignation rending the hearts of affectionate kindred at the treatment of those endeared to them, during the brutal intoxication of victory. Better was it therefore to fall honourably, than to be reserved for triumph or punishment. Man is ever a barbarian greedy of revenge and slaughter. What have mercy and compassion shone forth, unless from the softening of his savage nature by education?

The Jews dreaded the Romans: no nation was treated with more wanton cruelty, or driven more irresistibly to seek an asylum in suicide. But the scourge of war has produced many imitators of their desperation, where surrender to an enemy was esteemed the worst of human fortunes. When Cassius, a city of Rhodes, besieged by Brutus, took fire, he sent his own soldiers to assist in quenching the flames. But the inhabitants were seized with a kind of frenzy, which can be no otherwise described than by calling it a passionate desire of death. Women and children, freemen and slaves, people of all ages and conditions, strove to repulse the soldiers as soon as they came to their assistance from the walls. With their own hands they collected wood and reeds, and all manner of combustibles, to spread the fire over the city, and encouraged its progress by all in their power. Thus assisted, the flames flew over the whole with dreadful rapidity; while Brutus, extremely shocked at this calamity, rode round the walls, and stretching forth

his hands to the inhabitants, intreated them to spare themselves and their city. Regardless of his intreaties, they sought, by every means, to put an end to their lives. Men, women, and even children, leapt with hideous outcries into the flames. Some threw themselves headlong from the walls, and others fell upon the swords of their parents, opening their breasts and intreating to be slain. When the city was in a great measure reduced to ashes, a woman was found who had hanged herself, with her young child fastened to her neck, and the torch in her hand with which she had fired her house. This deplorable object so much affected Brutus, that he wept on being told of it, and proclaimed a reward to any soldier who could save a Xanthian. It is said that not more than 150 were preserved, and these against their will."

In proportion as the passions of the weaker sex are more violent from their more delicate frame, so must their apprehensions of danger and indignity be more acute than those of their protectors: and in the paroxysms of despair, they have shewn they were capable of preserving themselves and their offspring from their enemies by a common sacrifice. For, as in the Cantabrian war, "mothers destroyed their children, to keep them from the hands of the foe;" so when the Cimbri were defeated, the Romans found the women in mourning by their carriages driving back the fugitives, and destroying their own children they then sought a voluntary

death.* As seasons of contention bring the most sudden reverses of fortune, so mankind have been sometimes careful to provide a remedy, though a desperate one, against it. The terror of falling into the hands of an enemy still subsists indeed, though the courtesy of war is greater, or more sparing of indignities. Yet in the present æra, more than solitary examples of suicide as a lesser evil can be instanced. Nor need we go farther than the Vendean war, which seemed to be characterized by the ferocity of cannibals; for it was prosecuted, on one part at least, more for extermination than for victory. In the year 1795, when the wreck of the forlorn army of the emigrants was invested by the republicans on a rock in Quiberon Bay, many brave men perished by their own hands, rather than surrender to their merciless foes.† The year preceding, General Moulin, on the other side, after being wounded, and having had his horse killed in battle, preferred a voluntary death to falling into the hands of the exasperated royalists.‡ Among 4000 prisoners taken on the for-

* *Plutarch* in vita Marci Bruti—in vita Caii Marii.—*Florus*, lib. iii. cap. 3.—Lib. iv. § 12, § 50.—*Strabo*, lib. iii. tom. I. p. 249.

† *Beauchamps* Histoire de la Guerre de la Vendée et des Chouans, tom. iii. p. 228.

‡ The same fate was ascribed to General Haxo; and the National Assembly decreed the erection of a marble column commemorative of the patriotism of both, as appears from the re-

mer occasion, were 900 gentlemen, almost all of whom, it appears, were led out in parties of from 40 to 70, after being confined some time in a church, and massacred in a neighbouring plain, now called the *Martyrs' Meadow*.

The ancient inhabitants of Spain are said to have prepared a kind of poison from a certain herb to be ready in extremities, and it proved fatal without any pain.* Hannibal committed suicide by means of poison, which he always carried in his ring, from the dread of being delivered up to those enemies whom he had so bravely combated. That it has been customary to carry poison both in ancient and modern times, is established from the authority of historians of the best credit: and its ready ministry hastened the completion of many tragedies. When the king of Mauritania, dreading the shame and exposure of his weakness in his union to a captive queen, he retired to his tent, where the agitation which he suffered became audible to those standing around it. "At last, uttering a deep groan he called one of his faithful attendants, in whose custody was the poison, kept according to the custom of kings, to meet the reverse of fortune, and after it was mixed in a cup he ordered it to be carried

cord of its sittings. Haxo, however, was shot, from his desperate resistance of the soldiers of Charette, the Vendean chief, who had commanded them to take him alive.

* *Pliny Historia Naturalis*, lib. xvi. cap. 20.—*Strabo*, lib. iii. tom. i. p. 251.

to Sophonisba, recommending to her to remember her father, her country, and the two sovereigns to whom she had been united, for she could not fall alive into the hands of the Romans." Sophonisba mildly received the cup, saying she took it as a nuptial gift, and one not unacceptable if her husband could offer nothing better: yet she would have been more content if she had not entered into wedlock on the verge of her funeral rites; and then drank the contents without fear or hesitation.*

§ 11. *Suicide to escape Servitude.*—As it is the nature of mankind to hope the best, so do they seldom resort to suicide when the most distant prospect opens of a remedy to their evils. But the apprehension of evil, we have just observed, is sometimes in itself intolerable: it seems beyond endurance, and many will rather die than agree to suffer. In this country, as is well known, while the great proportion of the inhabitants have been ready for perils, as they were earnest for reputation, not a few have voluntarily disabled themselves from their horror of naval and military service when liable to be called on for either. During the late consulate in France, nine conscripts being drawn for the army, they remained for a time in concealment, and when discovered they continued to entertain such an un-

* *Livy*, lib. xxx. cap. 15. *Forma erat insignis, et florentissima ætas*, cap. 12.

conquerable aversion to military service; that, encouraging each other to suicide, they drowned themselves together.*

It may be very readily concluded, that suicide is frequently the close of a life of slavery; for truly no condition can be more deplorable than that of servitude under merciless masters: Neither, perhaps, is it rare, when perpetual and rigorous confinement is the lot of the prisoner. The slave and the prisoner too often are subservient to the wanton caprice of tyrants, whose conscience does not hold them accountable for their actions, and who may commit their barbarities in secret. Maltreatment in freedom sometimes conducts the unhappy object to despair.

Snelgrave, the surgeon of a Guinea ship, affirms, that the Cormantine negroes, carried to the West India islands, despise punishment, and even death itself; and if treated with severity to make them work, "twenty or more have hanged themselves in a plantation."†

Perhaps no place of confinement exists, not even in these islands, where the prisoner is safe from extortion and oppression; and if this may be practised, as it assuredly is frequently here, we may conceive the aggravations in other countries. Fifty Malabar pirates having been taken and thrown into a

* *Holcroft, Travels, vol. iii. p. 209.*

† *Snelgrave, Account of some parts of Guinea, p. 173.*

dungeon at Goa, where Dellon, the relater of the fact, was afterwards imprisoned by the inquisition, "the horrible famine which they suffered cast more than forty of them into such despair, that they strangled themselves with their turbans."^{*} These are the last of all suicides which possibly can come to light; for many have been plunged into dungeons from which they were fated never to escape alive.

§ 12. *Suicide from Indigence.*—Notwithstanding the unconquerable violence of the passions, the sense of dishonour, the dread of an enemy, disappointed affections, or impatience of controul, may lead to unreflecting suicide; that resulting from simple weariness of life, from melancholy or indigence, perhaps is the sequel of long premeditation. The statesman never quits the brink of a precipice, the warrior is always opposed to danger, the philosopher reasons himself into the belief that "conceiving death an evil, alone makes it so;"[†] and all feeling the uncertainties of their condition, who cannot consent to reverses, must be supposed in a certain state of readiness for that change which may be effected through the medium of their own hands. But is not this a grievous alternative to the watchful citizen, the lowly, industrious, and willing artizan, who vainly struggles to obtain his own

^{*} Dellon, History of the Inquisition at Goa, ch. 5.

[†] Epictetus Enchiridion, § 10.

and the bread of his dependant family? Are not the privations inseparable from an humble sphere, a sufficient evil in themselves, that the sun shall rise only to light the labourer to his toil, and go down on the scanty earnings which are to gain him scanty fare? Yet it is distressing to find that hardships may become intolerable even to those inured to rigour, that disappointments may prove greater than can be borne. As indigence urges mankind, they are the more reluctant to disclose the truth in soliciting relief of their necessities. Alas! the remark of the poet is too true, that poverty makes men ridiculous. The stratagems to disguise it are infinite.*

Perhaps many examples of such suicides do not reach our observation: the station of the perpetrator tends in itself to concealment; perhaps also when they do occur, they are committed in a way which renders it equivocal, whether they are voluntary, or the result of necessity. Certainly they are very often contemplated, and it is probable they are by no means few.† An affecting instance happened in London, where Robert Smith,

* Nil habet infelix paupertas durius in se
Quam quod ridiculos homines facit.

Juvenal, Sat. iii. v. 152.

† *Wendeborn, View of England, vol. i. p. 244, 245:* "Poverty, arising from the dearness of living and numberless taxes in England, I have frequently found to induce the unfortunate to suicide."

an industrious tradesman, being reduced to indigence without any hopes of relief, resolved to end his days by suicide. He sat down, and calmly wrote a distinct narrative of his misfortunes, showing that he could not fly from them otherwise: after which he put his wife and child to death, and then fulfilled his desperate purpose. *

Patience and resignation, indeed, conjoined with confidence that Providence will not forsake the miserable, counteract the strongest inducements to suicide from poverty. Occupation, likewise, however inconsiderable, engaging the mind for the time, banishes painful reflections, and mitigates sorrow: and so long as something better may be expected, we never contemplate any thing worse. The impression conveyed by the surrounding objects, the scenery and its alternations, divert our thoughts from the unvaried theme in which they are bound up. A greater aggregate of misery is disseminated proportionally in great capitals than in the country; for those whom indigence approaches shift their abode in hopes of meliorating their fortune; besides, mankind being sustained by each other, and compelled to call in each others aid, promotes an influx to places already populous. The inhabitants of cities, too, are concentrated within narrow limits, bringing them under common and reciprocal observation: those of the country are widely dispersed. Their

* *Moore on Suicide*, vol. ii. p. 165.

pride demands a better appearance than is consistent with their necessities, and they conclude that their mode of life should not seem contemptible in the eyes of their neighbours; an unhappy kind of emulation, indeed, too generally diffused among all classes at the present day. Undoubtedly the sense of dishonour is sometimes an ingredient which operates even in the suicides of the indigent. A far larger proportion of destitute persons is said to perish in this way in Paris than in London.* Yet we would incline to form a different conclusion, were the observation applicable to the essential character of the natives of either capital. Despair of prosperity, and extreme necessity, must unite in promoting the indigent to quit this world. But it is not unlikely that the suicide of the opulent miser may result from the apprehension of indigence, without awaiting its arrival: some individuals have been seized with this inexplicable prepossession, though holding lucrative employments, or owning ample estates, apparently transporting them beyond the reach of penury. It is not rare for those whose affairs fall into disorder to commit precipitate suicide, from dreading poverty as inevitable, instead of patiently abiding the time of their retrieval.

Without entering at greater length on this investigation, it will be found that the causes of sui-

* *Mercier, Tableau de Paris, tom. iii. p. 196, 196.*

cide are almost as numerous as certain classes of the passions themselves, and too evident a demonstration of the excesses into which mankind can wilfully plunge. Its sudden perpetration will sometimes lead us to think they proceed alike from intemperate fits of rage or caprice. "Not long since," says Muralt, "a young man, and an only son, drew a pistol out of his pocket and shot himself through the head in his father's presence, because he refused him money." It is recent in recollection, that in the year 1823 a similar occurrence happened, and it was believed for a similar reason; but attended with this cruel aggravation, that the son committed parricide at the same moment that he became his own destroyer.

Truly, we may affirm, that suicide sometimes ensues from the most capricious motives; possibly were its sources laid open, we might find them even in curiosity to know death and futurity. The celebrated Cardan, an Italian physician, framed his own horoscope according to the fashion of his times, from which he concluded that the duration of life would not exceed 40 or 45 years; and he remarked that the line of life itself on his right hand was very short.* But having attained an advanced age in perfect health, without finding the prediction of the stars likely to be fulfilled, his contemporaries affirm that he starved himself, in order that some part of

* *Cardan de Vita Propria*, cap. 41: *Linea vitæ valde brevis.*

his menaced fate might not be disappointed.* Cardan's biography by himself, wherein he acknowledges that to his cost he had put too great confidence in astrology, also testifies his weakness, his superstitious and extravagant opinions, though nowhere indicating a disposition to suicide. But he says his father died on the ninth day of his abstinence from food.

It is to be deduced, therefore, from the preceding observations, that there is scarcely any strong, pertinacious, or predominant sentiment occupying the mind which may not terminate in an act of violence to the body. Enlarging our illustrations of the other passions, besides those which have been assumed as sources of suicide, would tend to further conviction of the fact. Thence, if any nation be more propense than another to self-destruction, it ensues from the prevalence of some particular mental affection which has not been properly subdued by reason and education; or from allowing the ungovernable influence of some sudden impulse.

But let us now say a few words on approximations to suicide, that absolute disregard of life or eagerness for destruction, which sometimes has spread like an infectious distemper. Those unhappy wretches in Denmark who longed after death, but thought it sinful to commit suicide, were ultimately guilty of an aggravated offence in destruction of the

* *Thuanus*, lib. lxii, cap. 5. tom. iii. p. 462, ad an. 1576.

innocent. If suicide be a crime in a political view, we are bound to take care of our lives: if religion prohibits it, we are not to make ourselves a needless sacrifice; for it cannot be designed by the divine Power, that we shall throw away what his will has bestowed upon us, and what he has invested us with the means of preserving for a season. So long as we are not overborne by the passions, and reason retains its command, and so long as our condition in life is not intolerable, it is a great inconsistency to desire to die. Nevertheless, the mind is so constituted as to become liable to evil as well as to good impressions, and its weakness is so much exposed to be disordered by prejudice or superstition, that life, the most wonderful and the most precious gift of heaven, is contemned. Yet, to die in a good cause has been always an object of anxious desire; and hence that eagerness for martyrdom, which, though not directly self-murder, has shone in approximations to suicide during the earlier æras of Christianity, as amidst the political convulsions of later times. "For that age was grown so hungry and ravenous of it, that many were baptized only because they would be burnt, and children taught to vex and provoke executioners that they might be thrown into the fire."* They did not avoid, but they courted danger; they professed their opinions, and they were ready to suffer for them; nor was it without reason, after a few of the crowds who sought it were put to

* *Denne, Balthazarus*, p. 6.

death, that the executioner reminded the deluded survivors, that they would find ropes and precipices enough, whereby to destroy themselves without compelling him to do so.* Scarcely was sentence passed on those first accused, when others hurried to the tribunal, confessing that they too were Christians; they heard their doom joyfully, and, disregarding the prospect of torment, advanced with alacrity, and singing hymns, to death.† Mental alienation, from violent prejudices, puts any other complexion on this subject than the truth; and while blinded by superstition, the passions take total possession of us, making us believe that vice is virtue. In the reign of Constantine, a race of ruffians, sprung out of a new sect of Christians, said to have armed themselves with weapons called the *Clubs of Israel*, when rushing forth against the enemies of their doctrine, barbarously murdered them. These odious monsters, living in cottages, and imitating the austerity of hermits, not only perpetrated shocking cruelties on others, but refused to spare themselves; for they resorted to various modes of destruction, throwing themselves from precipices, or into the fire, or rivers; and threatening those they met, with death unless they would consent to kill them.‡ But superstition is prejudice: it is not

* Tertullian ad Scapulam, § 4.

† Eusebius Historia Ecclesiastica, lib. viii. cap. 9.

‡ Augustinus de Hæresibus, cap. 69. "Circumcelliones genus hominum agreste et famosissimæ audaciæ non solum in alios im-

religion—and the last act of wisdom surely is a man exposing himself to death in support of opinions regarding matters not of his own experience. One of those enthusiasts, now canonized by the apostolic see, is said to have offered to burn himself among those he wished to convert, in evidence of his conviction that his opinions were true. We read, that when the ignorant inhabitants of Iceland were divided about the expediency of receiving Christianity, two of its adversaries proposed a solemn human sacrifice, to learn the will of the gods. To be equal with them, its promoters, to prove their own conviction of the truth, proposed that the sacrifice should be of themselves. Many persons also have shewn, by personal suffering, their determination to abide by their sentiments. The pertinacious adherence of individuals to forbidden principles, together with obtruding themselves and their doctrines on the constituted authorities, have provoked the complement of their destiny. “But come, worthy governors,” cries Tertullian, “you will appear much better to the people after having sacrificed Christians to them. Torture, rack, condemn, and trample upon us. The proof of our innocence is your iniquity.”*

mania facinora perpetrando, sed nec sibi eadem insana feritate parcendo. Nam per mortes varias, maxime precipitiorum et aquarum et ignium seipsos necare consuerunt et in istum furorem alios quos potuerint sexus utriusque seducere, aliquando ut occidantur ab aliis mortem nisi fecerent comminantes.” The author seems to place them in Africa.

* *Tertullian Apologeticus adversus Gentes, cap. 45. in fine.*

tius, one of the earliest fathers of the church, forced himself into the presence of Trajan, who told him he did not appear to be in his sound mind; and, from his conduct, brought forth a decree from this otherwise merciful emperor, which was called one of martyrdom. He courted the sentence.* On the way from Antioch to Rome, he addressed an epistle to the Romans, saying, "I long to enjoy the wild beasts prepared for me: I pray that they may rush against me in their rage, that I may be devoured, and that they do otherwise than with some, whom they seemed afraid to touch: Or, should they prove unwilling, I shall even provoke them to it." Ignatius was carried to Rome, and actually devoured by lions, as he desired. He was accessary to his own death; for whoever does not retreat from impending destruction, and deliberately advances towards it without necessity, is hastening his final catastrophe, and thus approximating to suicide. Is not one who swallows poison accidentally, and refuses an absolute antidote, very nearly a self-destroyer?—Another martyr, named Germanicus, a young man in the flower of his age, despising the admonition of the proconsul to spare himself, attracted the wild beast towards him which was destined to be his executioner.†—Theodoret relates, that a

* *Martyrium S. Ignatii*, § 6.

† *S. Ignatius Epistola ad Romanos*, § v.—*Eusebius*, lib. iii. cap. 33.—Lib. iv. cap. 15.—*Hieronymus de Viris illustribus*,
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young woman at Edessa, with a boy in her arms, forced her way through the crowd, filled with holy fervour, and, instead of being terrified, held such things in derision: on being called to the prefect, she told him that she hastened to share in the destruction whereby he wished to extirpate her comrades, while the child should accompany her in death.* The eagerness of the early Christians for martyrdom, infinitely exceeded the zeal of the modern Eastern devotees to perish under the car conveying their monstrous idols. It was a real mental epidemic. Tiberianus, the prefect of Palestine, complained of his fatigues in punishing and delivering over to execution the Galileans calling themselves Christians, who incessantly, and spite of all admonition and menaces, laid themselves open to destruction, by declaring what they professed.†—A question arose on the lawfulness of resisting destiny, and it was determined to be more culpable to seek security than to encounter danger during persecution and abide its penalties. Their boldest counsellors loudly preached, “Fear not those who may slay the body, but who are able to injure the soul.”‡ The persecuted followed their advice,

cap. 16, seems to copy the account of Ignatius.—*Epistola Ecclesiæ Smyrnenensis de Martyrio S. Polycarpi*, § 3.

* *Theodorus Historia Ecclesiastica*, lib. iv. cap. 16, 17.

† *Tiberianus ad Trajanum Relatio* ap: *Cotelierius S. S. Patrum Opera*, tom. ii. p. 181.

‡ *Tertullian de Fuga in Persecutione*, § 4, 5: *Fugiendum in persecutione non esse*.

and they suffered. Needless exposure is no testimony of prudence; for all prudent persons withdraw from danger, wisely concluding that if their words or their works can be of service, they must be themselves the authors of them. The ferocity of religious and political zeal, bewilders the mind as much as any other delirium, in impelling the stronger cruelly to dismember and root out all who think differently from themselves concerning the same subjects.

In the course of the horrible persecutions of France, about the year 1792 and 1793, many were in such a state of uncertainty, distress, and peril, that they ardently invoked death to put a period to their sufferings. Deprived of subsistence, proscribed in their native soil, immured in prisons, the axe continually suspended over them, "the love of life was extinguished in every breast. I have seen above ten women, who, not daring to swallow poison, exclaimed, 'Long live the king!' and by this means committed to the hateful tribunals the charge of terminating their days."* Families rejoiced when they could perish together: they held it in greater terror to be left behind than to accompany their beloved parents, or husbands, or protectors, to the scaffold. A young woman in the prison of the Luxembourg was plunged in despair

* *Riouffe, Memoires D'un Detenu*, p. 69.

at being excepted from the indictment comprehending all her family, her father, her mother, and her sister. While abandoning herself to tears and lamentations, her accusation arrived: joy succeeded sorrow; she embraced them all, crying, now we shall die together, and, attiring herself with alacrity, cut off her own hair.* Another young female, Madame Larochejaquelein relates, would not listen to the instances of an officer to save her, but rushed into the river Loire to share the fate of her mother.†

During that reign of terror, though none hurried to martyrdom like the early Christians, they scarcely averted the blow: Not, indeed, from an enthusiastic admiration of liberty, but because they had given themselves up for lost. A merchant accused at Lyons of undertaking commissions, was asked by his judges, "Do you love money?" he answered, "Like yourselves." "Did you carry arms during the siege?" "Like yourselves." "Are you a patriot?" "Like yourselves." He made no other defence, and he was acquitted.

A young girl of sixteen was tried by the same judges for refusing to wear the tricoloured cockade. Being asked the reason, "It is not the cockade that I hate," she replied, "but since it is borne by you, it seems to me the signal for crimes, and it shall never go on my head again." The judge

* *Nougaret*, tom. ii. p. 85.

† *Larochejaquelein*, *Memoires*, tom. ii. p. 172. et seq.

made a sign to a turnkey behind her to fasten on a cockade. "Depart," said he, "you are saved by wearing it." Immediately rising, with great calmness she removed the obnoxious decoration, saying, "I return it to you,"—and was led forth to close the final tragedy of her existence. Others, who were not accused, hastened in despair before the sanguinary tribunal, imploring that sentence might be passed on them also, because their whole kindred had been thus cut off.

Yet many had drank deep of the intoxicating draught of ideal liberty: while one race of tyrants exterminated another, they sighed for their country, and mistook anarchy for freedom.

The natives of England are said to be the most addicted to suicide of all people; and the source of this peculiarity has been sought in various causes. But why should we go farther than the nature of the climate, if that has any influence, and ascertaining what are the most predominant and uncontrollable passions of the mind? If we be not inured to temperance in youth, if we yield to every sudden gust of violence, if we be in a state of frequent exposure to vicissitudes, and have imbibed such a share of impatience, or such a lofty sense of dishonour, as to believe every reverse intolerable, suicide cannot be rare. It is maintained to be the result of education; that the passions are little controlled, and far less subdued in youth; that the enjoyment of life is placed in personal gratifications;

that the people become habitually violent, incapable of repairing misfortune, or of enduring it; and that still another cause renders suicide more frequent in England, namely, the extreme importance attached to public opinion, so that life becomes insupportable to the man whose reputation is sullied.* Further it is said, that nothing will divert the English from any design, and especially of that of suicide. It has been contended, that suicide is almost totally unknown among one considerable class of the inhabitants of Britain, the Quakers; and this is ascribed to the greater steadiness with which their children are educated. They are silently and imperceptibly accustomed to self-command and moderation; and thus lay in an unusual share of mental tranquillity, adapting them for worldly accidents. Another cause has been given for the frequency of suicide, in the want of a vent for feelings, or soothing the conscience by auricular confession, such as is practised in Catholic countries. Undoubtedly, the necessities to which a certain stage of advancing society gives birth, must also generate other passions than those concomitant on a simple and pristine state: and as they are not sufficiently watched, they are allowed to foment themselves until nothing can re-

* *De Stael*, *Reflexions sur le Suicide*, p. 38: A work written in atonement for having countenanced suicide "when in the pride and vivacity of early youth."—*Wendeborn*, *View of England*, vol. i. p. 244, 245; 396—399.—*Murali*, *Letters*, p. 16, 44—46:

strain them. The modern English, it has been remarked, are much more prone to suicide than the ancient Britons, who could easily satisfy their wants, and bear hardships and adversities with greater patience and indifference. Even in the most disturbed times, during the persecutions for religious and political opinions of old, and amidst the scourge of civil war, we rarely hear of suicide. Perhaps it was a deeper sense of religion that deterred the sufferers. The moment placidity departs, the passions begin to reign; and in their despotism, they ruin others or ourselves. Habitual composure will strengthen their bonds, and save mankind from destruction. But if they plunge headlong into hazard, how shall they be preserved? if they adventure their tranquillity along with their fortune, if they advance their peace and reputation together, where neither may be redeemed, shall they hope for impunity? Certainly the civil condition of a country has a sensible influence on the cause of suicide; for the state and the manners of the people are the sources or the regulators of the passions. The later suicides of Britain have been remarkably enlarged from the fall of eminent statesmen, whose brain perhaps, unable to bear the weight with which they had overloaded it, sunk under the pressure, and terminated in mental alienation; for it does not appear that any of them were sane.—Suicide may be promoted or restrained by the propagation of opinions, and the prevalence of manners, as secondary

causes: but its radical cause lies in the circumstances personally attached to the individual. Nevertheless, it will be found to be much more common at one time than another; that it will increase and abate, according as the pursuits, the customs of mankind alter, according as resignation, violence, and despondency prevail; and especially the light in which the act itself is beheld, must have a decided influence. Those magnanimous sentiments which taught the illustrious Romans to die by their own hands for the welfare of their country, are now no more in Italy: Political persecution having ceased in France, along with the overthrow of its tyrants, the necessity for self-destruction to escape them has terminated. Perhaps that luminous era is not distant, when the triumph of reason over superstition, or the courage of the governor, may permit the balsam of humanity, to be poured forth to the natives of eastern regions, and extinguish the pile of the suicide. Mankind, however, being animated by strong dispositions towards despotism in religious as well as political oppression, they hold it a virtue to prohibit dissent from their opinions. Therefore it would be hard to predict that self-destruction shall be rooted out eternally; for many victims might again fall under growing fanaticism, in the renewal of the consequence with renewal of intolerance or imbecility. The scourge of war and famine, where neither has been hitherto known, if there are such countries, may spread the evil of suicide.

The facility of commission is not to be altogether thrown out of account, as promoting, or at least enlarging the sphere of self-destruction ; for some of those who discover how life may be easily taken from others, will not scruple to apply the same means to themselves. It is not, as of old, that this desperate determination may be freely announced ; the deed, in general, is silently done, and by females especially, in such a way as to elude detection. The proximity of lakes and rivers has proved the forfeiture of many lives ; deleterious drugs and potions, unreservedly distributed, have hastened the sleep of the miserable to death.

Natural placidity, subjugation of the stormy passions, and patient resignation under vicissitudes, will temper the mind to circumstances : But above all, that constant occupation affording exercise for the person, and intellectual enjoyment, will lead to the basis of a happy life, and banish impatience to quit existence before the appointed time.

The number of unfortunate persons perishing annually by suicide in Europe is very great : it amounts to many thousands. Nor does it seem likely to diminish, unless there could be a further controul of fortune, and a discipline of the passions introduced almost superior to the ordinary faculties of mankind. It is an evil originating in such an infinity of causes, that it extends so wide as to comprehend all different ranks and denominations of people. The male sex in the West, and the fe-

male in the East, have always afforded the greater number of self-destroyers respectively. Females in Europe, if not habitually more placid, have more constant employment, and are more patient and resigned than men. Those in the East are the victims of blind superstition and barbarous usages, which they dare not infringe. When the population of England was scarcely half its present amount, the number of suicides was calculated at a thousand yearly.* Let it be admitted that there were no absolute data for the computation, and that there is an exaggeration here, every one knows the frequency of the fact throughout the kingdom, although he has not actually enumerated the whole. Some time previous to the year 1790, the suicides in London were estimated at about 32 annually, but those of Paris at 150.† Some time previous to the year 1804, they had increased to 193 in the French capital, and to about an equal number in the country; and at that time there was an edict against selling any drugs which might occasion sudden death.‡ They seem to have increased prodigiously; for, according to a recent statement, the suicides in Paris during the year 1820 were 325, and no less than 348 in 1821. Suicide unquestionably is not proportionally as common in London, a city consider-

* *Moore on Suicide*, vol. i. p. 355.

† *Mercier, Tableau de Paris*, tom. iii. p. 195.

‡ *Holcroft, Travels*, vol. ii. p. 197.

ably larger, though the number of self-destroyers has been esteemed equivalent. But, according to some authorities, those of neither approach nearly to the proportion found in certain cities of Germany, though none of the causes or inducements be explained.

It is impossible to form a probable computation of the suicides in the East; for the narratives regarding them are extremely discordant. On the one hand, the self-immolation of widows in our own Eastern territories is rated at hundreds yearly; on the other, it is denied to be frequent. Eleven widows of the Rajah of Vellore resolved to burn themselves along with his body: and thirteen sacrificed themselves on the pile of two chiefs who had died on a visit to Shah Jehan, the sovereign of Bengal, in the year 1642.* Bernier, an accurate observer, relates, that five females attending a young Hindoo widow, rushed amidst the flames consuming their mistress.† Another traveller is referred to, for 300 concubines of the King of Tanjore having burned themselves at his funeral, and 400 of a king of Madura on a similar occasion. In the African kingdom of Dahomy, 285 women destroyed each other and themselves when their sovereign died in 1774, and the incredible number of 595 perished thus in the year 1789.‡ These extraordinary ac-

* *Tavernier, Travels, Part ii. Book 3. chap. 8.*

† *Bernier, Voyages, tom. ii. p. 113.*

‡ *Dalzel, History of Dahomy, p. 205.*

counts require corroboration; yet, considering the extravagance of mankind, and the unequalled frenzy of the passions, it is possible they may be confirmed. But, who will believe that in Hindostan, "ten thousand widows perish on the funeral pile, in the short space of twelve months!"* The older missionaries affirm, that many thousands died annually by suicide in the Chinese empire; to which the attention of those more recently established does not seem to have been attracted.†

Infinite difficulties will always oppose our endeavours to ascertain the exact number of suicides, either here or elsewhere, which in European states is owing to several causes. Suicide is anxiously concealed by the family of its perpetrator, from conviction that it is usually ascribed to insanity; and some, by an unintelligible explication, have endeavoured to interpret it as that sacrilegious offence, so obscure in Scripture, called, the sin against the Holy Ghost. Instead of referring insanity to the simple operation of disease, the superstitious ascribed it to the presence of an evil spirit which had taken possession of the patient; and they have actually transmitted to us from of old, and called for our belief, of the words and actions of the dæmon. This expulsion of the rational principle or the conquest

* *Ward on the Hindoos*, vol. ii. p. 128.

† *Trigaultius de Christiana Expeditione apud Sinas*, lib. i. cap. 9. p. 94: "Some to distress their enemies."

of the soul, betokening an abandonment of the protection of Providence, was beheld with horror, which has descended to the ignorant of modern nations; and now the majority witness so deplorable a calamity with mingled sensations of apprehension and shame. But the European legislators, though they could not declare the visitation of insanity punishable, have nevertheless attached several barbarous penalties to suicide. In their mitigation, the self-destroyer is called a lunatic: a shade of obloquy, from indulgence, is extended to his relations, that their inheritance from him may be preserved. The number of suicides, therefore, even from the most authentic sources that can be expected, will be always underrated.

The precise view in which suicide has been beheld by the different nations of the world is not satisfactorily explained: but it is evident, that an act so abhorrent to the first and strongest of principles, self-preservation, never could meet universal applause. Extreme violence is seldom justified unless by extreme necessity; and as the tenor of human life is holding a middle course, mankind cannot be easily reconciled to excesses. The doctrine of those philosophers inculcating the expediency of suicide as a laudable sacrifice, or a sovereign and ready antidote under vicissitudes, being founded on the most recondite theory, could have few proselytes. Habit and superstition, or the dread of shame, have obtained many more. In general,

it may be concluded, that all the approbation bestowed on the victim, has been qualified by considering the peculiarity of his case. Nevertheless, custom, prejudice, and false conceptions of celestial ordinances, or sublunary arrangements, may pervert the soundest judgment, and can teach us to do what nature and duty disown.

Suicides in the ancient Grecian states were refused funereal honours, no slight penalty, as it was believed to deprive the soul of future repose:* and the Milesian virgins, if we are to hold their city as a colony of Greece, were threatened with ignominy after death, to repress their eagerness for self-destruction. Likewise the Roman soldiers, who, in the reign of the Tarquins, sought relief from certain labours in suicide, were deterred by exposure on crosses of those who had killed themselves.†

The voluntary immolation of the survivors at the funerals of departed patrons, friends, and relatives, practised by so many nations of the globe, we find has settled into a regular and appointed custom among the widows of certain tribes of Hindostan; and that it has subsisted unchanged during the longest record of time. Not only so, but there are five different kinds of suicide recognized by the laws of the Mogul empire as meritorious; sometimes being enjoined in atonement for the sins of former life, which are supposed to be visited by penalties in this, sometimes recommended as a road to felicity

* *Petit Commentarius in Leges Atticas*, lib. vii. tit. i. § 19.

† *Pliny Historia Naturalis*, lib. xxxvi. cap. 24. § 3.

in the future state :* and a monument is commonly erected on the spot, where any one has thus died a legal voluntary death.

At this day it is not evident whether it be countenanced or otherwise by uncivilized tribes, or those in the lowest advances to improvement. We might reasonably conclude, where life is held of little account, where there are neither laws nor religion, and where no one is responsible for his actions unless injurious to his neighbours, that depriving himself of existence cannot be deemed an offence against society. Yet, by a tribe called Fantees, on the western coast of Africa, it "is considered with abhorrence, and the bodies of such self-devoted criminals are burned, unless a considerable sum be paid to the elders of the people or judges, for permission to give them decent sepulture :"[†] And of another tribe on the same coast it is affirmed, that the body of the suicide is not allowed to be buried, but "is thrown out to the fields to be devoured by wild beasts," of which the relator witnessed one instance.[‡]

Almost the whole of the moderns have inclined to deny the possibility of suicide in sound judg-

* *Abul Fazel Ayeen Akbery*, vol. iii. p. 172, 174, 256, 274. These are specified to be, 1. An individual starving himself. 2. Covering himself with cow-dung, and setting fire to it. 3. Burying himself in snow. 4. Allowing himself to be devoured by alligators in the Ganges. 5. Cutting his throat at Allahabad, at the confluence of the Ganges and the Jumna.—*Asiatic Researches*, vol. ii. p. 256. Note.

† *Meredith on the Gold Coast*, p. 113.

‡ *Macleod, Voyage to Africa*, p. 48.

ment, just as pious persons are unwilling to allow that there can be an atheist; or as the virtuous, indulgent, and philanthropic, are unable to bring their minds to suppose that man can be radically vicious.

All the European states having been solicitous to inculcate an abhorrence of the act, as adverse to religion, law, and moral duty, various penalties, some of the most unjust description, have been denounced against it. Nor is it entirely without reason, that an enlightened author complains that "we do all in our power to render the memory of the suicide infamous: we drive a stake through his body, and dishonour his family. We punish a son for having lost his father, and a widow because she is deprived of her husband. We even confiscate the effects of the deceased, and rob the living of that which is justly their due."* Certainly suicide at no time was so frequent in Europe as to demand repression by such an accumulation of punishments. In November 1793, the National Convention of France decreed the confiscation of the property of suicides, not perhaps so much to restrain the hand of the self-destroyer, as to insure profit to the republic, or the spectacle of blood to the people: For the enactment followed those repeated attempts at suicide, which arose out of the persecution of the times, and comprehended within its limits those unhappy persons who should obtain their death from the hand of another.†

* *Voltaire* on Beccaria's Treatise on Crimes and Punishments.

† The law passed in consequence of attempts at suicide after sentence, by General Houchard, and Gilbert Desvoisins, formerly

It remained for the British legislature of the year 1823 to repeal the barbarous usages of our ancestors, which enjoined indignities to the body of the unhappy being who perished by his own hands.

Amidst the discordant opinions advanced by those enlightened persons who are accustomed to weigh their words, is it prudent to decide on the lawfulness of suicide? If, on the one hand, it be held a laudable and suitable act under certain circumstances, and if, on the other, none whatever are to be judged sufficient extenuation of a crime called great against God and man, where ought the preponderance to lie? From the powers of volition conferred on mankind, they are surely permitted the preference of sensible good; and where conviction tells them the subsistence of a greater evil, it is imperious on their sensations that a lesser be chosen. They are irresistibly, nay unconsciously, impelled to it, both by their corporeal structure and their mental sensibilities. If they resolve to endure excruciating agonies which may be shunned, it is from the dominion of the mind rearing itself against the susceptibility of the body. But this is a gift reserved from many. Hence shall we prohibit the unhappy sufferer to withdraw and seek refuge in eternity, when he languishes in intolerable torment, when no

President of the Parliament. Some members pleaded that the republic would have been disappointed of their confiscation had they succeeded, which was important, as the revenues of the latter amounted to about £12,000 yearly.

cheering ray of hope can break in upon the scene of sorrow, where morning dawns and evening shuts on endless misery?—We can feelingly paint the rigours of winter, while basking in the summer's sunshine, and buffet with the raging tempest while reposing amidst tranquillity. We can rave with the madman, touch the key-note of his frenzy, or calmly tell the gnashing of his teeth, and the binding of him with chains. Fancy is a ready architect; but fancy's forms are elusory and unstable. Are not those whose fate has never been darkened by the frowns of fortune, the boldest encouragers of patience, the loudest declaimers against despair? The gay votary of pleasure recoils from the hideous spectre of mortality—the opulent and successful, unsubdued by disappointment, haughty in their enjoyments, eagerly postpone the hour of their dissolution as an indefinite incident. They have not yet attained that age, they say, when many fall: their mind is entire, their system is more than vigorous—they have much to do before they die.—But the chaplet has fallen, the blossoms have withered as they sprung. The interval between death and the miserable seems short. They have bade adieu to peace: they have no joys to expect, no comforts to leave. Their confidence reposes in things to come: they look to that asylum where happiness crowns immortality.

Yet suicide is a horrid deed: it is one at which nature revolts, and mankind shudder. The origin

of life is not in our hands : we are forbidden to know the day of our departure. If we confide in the divine dispensations—if believing that there is an appointed station for us to fill during an appointed time, that our terrestrial state is one of trial and preparatory to celestial felicity, and that we are still in the guidance of a protecting power, it becomes us to abide patiently by our fate, lest it be deemed impious to withdraw.—

CHAPTER II.

DOES GREAT INEQUALITY ACTUALLY SUBSIST AMONG MANKIND?

IN our progress through life, we are arrested by astonishment at the apparent inequality subsisting among the legions of the world. Some are scorched between the tropics, some are chilled in the arctic regions; rocky mountains, arid deserts, barren wastes, seem assigned for the sustenance of man. Beauty and deformity are everywhere seen in close alliance, or health and disease associated together. Vigorous youth is dwelling with decrepid age—the beginning and the end of life are in contact. Prosperity attends the birth of one, misfortune follows the footsteps of another—the worthy are depressed; the worthless flourish. Honours and indignity, approbation and reproach, affluence and poverty, seem the alternate and undistinguished lot, decreed to constitute the happiness or the misery of mankind. We say to ourselves, “is all this right? might not Providence have made a better distribution to his creatures?”

Let us probe the truth. Perhaps our views are quite fallacious: seduced perhaps by external aspect, we have not sought for intrinsic value. We

have been content with that superficial examination which bears conviction to the weak, as sometimes the compassionate are deceived by giving too ready an ear to the complaint of the querulous.

It may be seriously questioned, whether many irreconcilable disparities subsist in the condition of mankind? Whether, in fact, with few exceptions, all the human race be not nearly on a parity?

The multitude, beholding the eager contention of mankind for wealth, and power, and splendour, must regard them as prizes of the highest value: they view them as the means wherewith all other benefits are to be obtained; and from the greatness of the sacrifices which purchase them, they conclude that they are the best promoters of pleasure. But the multitude cannot form a due estimate of the importance of the moral virtues as the foundation of felicity; they forget the avail of health to opulence, and that pomp is a flimsy covering to care.

What is the real pursuit of mortals but felicity, in whatever shape it shall be found? If their condition be irksome, they set out in quest of something grateful to the person, or pleasing to the mind. In proportion to its enjoyment, their condition is good or it is bad in life. Real good is a contribution both to the body and the soul; real evil, that which proves noxious to either. But intellectual qualities being paramount to sensual gratification, prohibits us from calling every suffering an evil, or every pleasure good.

Duly appreciating what is gratuitously held to constitute human felicity, will satisfy us whether mankind occupy precisely that position presented to the senses; whether we be not dazzled by the semblance of greatness, or moved by their lowly aspect; whether the apparent disparity of their state be intolerable.

Nature herself, superficially examined, seems to declare against equality; for there are not any two of her material products which to our grosser senses appear alike. But is it not in external form only? —We cannot reach the atoms whereof their substance is composed, or bring their elementary parts to view. All the tribes, and genera, and species of the animal world, ascending to man himself, though the farthest removed from each other in our apprehension, are very nearly approximated by intermediate shades. Receding from extremes, the widest distinctions come to merge in a common center: a medium is always found. Intimate points of correspondence can be shewn between the proud lord of the creation and the humblest insect that crawls in the dust: and, possibly, could our perceptions penetrate the arcana of organization, we might discover that the elements are simple when uncombined.

Nevertheless, even among things requiring the same conditions for their welfare, and linked together by analogies, an infinite external disparity appears, which we readily accept for intrinsic qualities. Yet however great the difference among

animated beings, from the discrepancies of form, the variety of passions, or intensity of sensations, they are seldom precluded from adapting themselves to the vast diversity of the circumstances of the world. Favourable provisions are annexed to their existence.

The majority of mankind find enjoyments where they expected none, by reconciling themselves to their condition. It is not because the climate is rigorous, or the soil is barren, that they forsake their native homes. Penury does not expel them: they become attached to desolation, were it there that they first saw the light. The Scottish Highlander discourses complacently of the comparative beauty of his mountains. The Icelander proverbially maintains, that "Iceland is the best country on which the sun shines,"* though its very name makes us shudder: and the Russian, returning from a distant clime, joyfully hailed the snow-topped mountains, the roaring volcanoes, and the dark forests of Kamtschatka as "a paradise, for it was a portion of his dear native land."†

Familiarity with objects dispels our prejudice against them, or generates satisfaction from their presence.

Comparing the savage state with the civilized condition, they seem altogether destitute of common

* *Henderson's Iceland*, vol. i. Introduction, p. 33.

† *Golownin*, Narrative, vol. ii. p. 211.

resemblance ; and that, unless in gratifying the animal appetites, no definite rules can put them on a parity. Yet has not the lowest stage of man its charms ? Who is so unwilling to quit his state as the savage ? who is so averse to the food, the raiment, the comforts, and the customs of polished man ? and who is so ready to relapse into his pristine debasement ?

But he who thus subsists in rude associations, commonly enjoys the more uninterrupted possession of health and vigour, both so essential for procuring the objects indispensable to his necessities. His desires seem fewer, and tempered with greater moderation ; his wants more easily satisfied. From the contracted range of his intellectual system, he neither knows to appreciate things unseen, nor to languish after them : nor, in the restriction of his pursuits, is he equally exposed to renewed mortifications and disappointment. Those who do not sow cannot be full of anxiety to reap. The savage stands degraded in our estimation, though not, perhaps, for the real causes which should render him odious : we depreciate, even among civilized society, those to whom our arts, our learning, and our polish are denied. Probably, however, he is the more vicious, the nearer his approach to the pristine state of man ; for, seeing how many precepts, how much education and strict example, how rigid must be the subjugation of the evil propensities preparatory to the practice of virtue, we cannot suppose that he can dispense with

all these important requisites, merely because he is born a barbarian. But it is not granted that we are entitled to rate the felicity of the savage as greatly inferior to our own, otherwise than by holding established virtue as essential towards a happy life.

Felicity consists less in sudden and tumultuous bursts of joy, than in that equal temperament of mind free of exaltation or depression, which we denominate tranquillity. But as this would be too passive a condition, there must be themes for mental exercise, something to stimulate towards action, which, proving useful, agreeable, or interesting, generate their own enjoyment.

It cannot be denied that the world is the theatre of misery ; that our felicity is liable to infringement from the revolutions of nature, as well as human conduct. Yet a vast variety of sources, isolated and independent of each other, afford satisfaction to mankind, whence comes necessarily an intermixture of good and evil. But enquiry and discrimination, perhaps, will prove, that there is no extraordinary preponderance of either in the universe, that privations are met by compensations in the grand arrangements of nature, and especially that the exclusive dispensation of good does not subsist in favour of many who seem to have the earth at command.

It is not the privileges of the human race that are to be estimated here, but the condition of its members ; and admitting that content is felicity, we shall arrive at this conclusion by generally sur-

veying the social bond, the sexual relations, or the personal and intellectual system.

Retracing part of our preceding discourse, the utmost inequality between the condition of the sexes of the human race is apparent throughout the globe. Man, a slave to his passions, propense to tyranny, haughty and impatient, availing himself of his superiority, is every where domineering over his weaker helpmate. A harder lot is assigned to women: they are rated as secondary beings, humbled and oppressed: Nor does candour even open to warn them of evil.—Who regards their welfare? May not every mother caution her daughter to beware of her most dangerous enemy in man, always ready to seduce her from the paths of virtue, always despising her for quitting them? The invasions of female tranquillity are numberless; nor can it be maintained that grave disasters fail of making a deep impression on them. But let it be remembered, that all their concerns with the world being so much narrower than those of the other sex, they are less exposed to distresses from its cares; while more copiously endowed with that patience and resignation springing up to meet misfortune. Women are not called on to enter equally into the lists of emulation, to make the same exertions, or to encounter the same perils which their protectors must always meet. A softer fate is theirs; and, amidst the contention of nations, they are almost universally spared. It is incumbent on the hus-

band, too, in every civilized condition, to provide for the exigencies of his household; and all responsibilities are incurred by him alone. Whatever be the state of either, does not the mother derive infinitely purer pleasure from the existence and society of her offspring, even from the hour of its birth until the moment of her own dissolution? Nor is it a small prerogative, one perhaps which levels many distinctions, that she can pronounce, with internal conviction of its certainty, "These children are my own." As occupation, personal or mental, is an important ingredient of felicity, none of that listless langour consuming their imperious masters in vacant hours, is reserved for females engaged in discharging domestic duties. Even humble offices, and much more as among ourselves the cultivation of elegant arts, combined with feminine employments, must promote satisfaction and tranquillity. Thus are women, in every condition, infinitely more contented than men: and if those who never cease to toil, never are disturbed by ambition, but reconcile themselves to their state, and make the best of it in fulfilling duty, their felicity is far more permanent than that of others seeking to change it, and always uncertain where to go. The condition of the sexes, therefore, the advantages attending the one and disadvantages incident to the other, are brought to a nearer equality than superficial observation allows; and although the pre-eminence does remain in favour of

men, and evident restraints are imposed on females in all countries, their real inferiority is by no means so great as we might be prone to infer. If virtue be the foundation of felicity, and if peace and tranquillity of mind promote content, as it is just to believe, because the evil passions are then suppressed, females should actually enjoy a greater portion of happiness than is allotted to men; and in this manner their respective fortune is brought still farther on a level.

The uniformity of that mode of life selected by our own choice, effectually promotes felicity; but this can be appreciated only by inspecting the interior of the household. Frequently the equilibrium is disturbed by those who, in possession of real good, would be the authors of other fortunes.

The spot which we occupy on earth is level in respect to ourselves: the higher we climb above it, the farther we have to return; for an universal medium must be preserved.

But mankind being endowed with a multitude of appetites, passions, and sensations, are subjected to their influence; and the humble, who view the station of the exalted from a distance, are prone to associate happiness along with it. Were they content with that original condition wherein Providence has assigned their birth, they would become rivetted to its enjoyments; but feeling it irksome, it is to be abandoned. They vainly conceive, that, after attainment of a definite object esteemed de-

sirable, nothing remains for their wishes ; and ardour smooths all the asperities opposing their progress. But if their pursuit be wealth, which even the unworthy may obtain, they have failed in following after the real good ; rank, nor popular applause, are the gifts of virtue ; content does not flow from prerogative, nor does power bring security.* The pleasures they afford must be fugacious. Those who mount the pinnacle reared by destiny on their daring ambition, hold a precarious place, removing them the farthest from tranquillity. Of all mankind, the ambitious are the least tranquil, for their mind can never rest.

Accidental greatness is an artificial character difficult to be sustained, and against which the circumstances of the world are warring ; for whatever is artificial is verging towards relapse into the natural state. Hence the more artificial, the higher the perils environing it.

But the vulgar, unable to judge justly of that condition which they behold with reverence, or are eager to obtain, form the falsest conclusions of its profits. Taking only its present external aspect, they calculate nothing on the toil and trouble of acquiring it, or the means of its preservation. We polish diamonds, and burnish gold : those whom they decorate are called magnificent, and the vul-

* *Cicero*, *Question. Tuscul. lib. v. § 16*: Quod enim est bonum id non quivis habere potest. Omitto nobilitatem famamque popularem stultorum improborumque excitatam.

gar weakly conjoin splendour with felicity. If the road to happiness be the exercise of virtuous energies, security, and repose from care, it is doubtful how far the great are occupied with its true pursuit.

But, for the sake of brevity, passing at once to sketch the fortune of the greatest of the great, and studying whether, as such, their condition be not the most artificial of any, and thence the most precarious, we shall learn if it be justly estimated. As the major proposition includes the minor in argument, so by progressively descending the scale, we should arrive at that point of inference showing felicity to be allied rather to humility than to greatness.

Something indeed seems to fascinate the eyes of unphilosophic mankind in the contemplation of royalty. Exempt from the rude assaults interchanged among the people, the governor of millions, the fountain of honour, the arbiter of justice, the denouncer of punishment, the highest earthly judge united in one exalted being, holds a most imposing name. It inspires a veneration second to that which is offered to divine nature. But were the present state of sovereigns overlooked, their origin recalled, and their conduct the subject of commentary, could the multitude penetrate to the privacy of their domestic life, the respect paid to the kingly office probably would be inconveniently impaired: For history shews the mean beginning, the accidental

rise, and the profligate life of many who have swayed the sceptre; and that they were no more exempted from all the incidents befalling humanity, than others seemingly unprotected against them. A crafty priest among the Jews brought two obscure and ignoble persons to fill the throne. Agathocles, King of Syracuse, was the son of a potter, and bred to his father's profession, which forsaking, he joined a band of robbers by land, and became a pirate at sea.* During the tumults which rendered the monarchy of Rome elective, we read that "Postumus being slain, Marius, formerly a smith, nor even now greatly skilled in warfare, seized on the government."† Thus desperate adventurers have been enabled, by a single step, to plant themselves at the head of nations: and the people have sometimes deemed it better to keep them there, than to deluge the country with blood by their removal, or by elevating another dynasty. Cromwell, like Marius, seized on the vacant sovereignty of Britain, though refusing the name of sovereign: and Napoleon Bonaparte, finding the throne of France empty, seated himself upon it. One of the most celebrated kings of Persia, in the preceding century, was originally a camel-driver. Progressive advances in military command usually have been readier means than civil promotions, to bring the ambitious adventurer

* *Diodorus Siculus*, lib. xix. § 1—5. tom. ii. p. 319. et seq.
Justin, lib. xxii. cap. 1.

† *Sextus Aurelius Victor* de Cæsaribus, cap. 33.

within grasp of the sceptre. But Justin relates, that the whole masters of the slaves in Tyre, except one old man, Strato, having been massacred from their insurrection, he and his son were appointed, from the necessity of the case, to rule in succession.*

It is in this ultimate state, surely the most artificial of all in civil life, because the farthest from an ordinary condition, that princes present themselves to the eyes of the multitude. But as it is the enjoyment of that tranquillity concomitant on virtue, not on external parade or despotic power, which constitutes real felicity, the first enquiry would be, whether princes truly have a more ample portion of virtue than their subjects? They are not worse than other men indeed, perhaps they are somewhat better; they have not all the temptations inducing many to go wrong; but history largely proves, that they are liable to every mental imperfection disturbing the resolutions and intentions of the good to go right; and that unless firmly fettered by their subjects, they are as little under self-controul as those of meaner station. The rage of the lion dreading no danger, is less fatal than the ebullitions of the despotic, who have none to fear, but hasten the fulfilment of their capricious and sanguinary decrees. Their passions are read in desolation and public mournings.

* *Justin*, lib. xvii. cap. 4.

The good indeed are anxious to gratify, while others desire to be gratified. But those who languish for power, must be content to labour in the discharge of duty: if men be eager to command, they must rigorously exact obedience. The chief of the nation cannot know repose: his minister, like himself, must be occupied in all concerns except his own. Cato complained that he was envied, because he was obliged to rise before day-break, and had to neglect his private affairs to attend to the interests of the public. So do men deceive themselves in estimating the advantages of the great. Are princes truly happier than their subjects?—They possess wealth and honours, indeed, that is rank and riches: they are the objects of veneration: they may follow their propensities without responsibility: they have, as it were, the power of keeping right, with the privilege of going wrong. Yet none of all this is essential for felicity. Ignorant of the benefit of self-controul, they should be more disposed to let loose their passions;—from the surrounding anxiety to anticipate their wishes, they should become habitually impatient. Men who are void of that call for active personal occupation, or who want that stimulus to mental exertion which, after protracted energy, demands cessation, cannot know the genuine enjoyment of repose. Unacquainted with those rational varieties which, in contemplating the chequered scenes of life, constitute real entertainment, they do not acquire the same in-

struction imparted by such profitable tuition to others. Intellectual resources, unless originating in the force of uncommon genius, are repressed; for the sedulous attentions whereby they are environed, deny them leisure for reflection, without which the mind is incapable of unfolding itself. They possess fewer accomplishments, also, which can be converted to an internal fund of amusement, from requiring none to contribute to their personal recommendations; nor would any display of emulative skill be laudable or consistent with their station.

If labouring under so many disadvantages, either princes, or the great and powerful, to whom they are also common, be disposed to error, we shall wonder, on appreciating its extent, that they do not go farther astray. Amidst parasites and flatterers, they seldom hear the remonstrance of sincerity on their imperfections, which bars the way to improvement: nor can they learn the truth, which so many, having much to expect, find it their interest to disguise. But even without their presence, if nature has not gifted them with vigorous intellect, clear perceptions, amiable dispositions, mental and personal energy, to fill up the measure of time, their hours, amidst the nominal regulation of public affairs, must be vacant, and their whole condition less enviable than that of the meaner people.

Mankind mistake the essence of that felicity they pant after, and of which they believe the great exclusively in possession. The imagination roves over

all the different conditions and circumstances which apparently are productive of pleasure, and beholding among them the display of temporary gratification, they falsely conceive it to be permanent. No less do they deceive themselves in supposing, that the condition of the great transferred to them would bring happiness along with it. If show and nothing real be alluring, that solid basis is wanting which felicity requires: and thus have many sacrificed substantial benefits for empty expectations, and become miserable in disappointment. Pomp, and power, and consequence, may have charms to the weak: But what are all these without their witnesses? One who builds a palace on an imposing site, does not perpetually pass the threshold to contemplate its grandeur: He desires the approbation of the spectator.

If the temporary gratification of some be derived from pomp, and power, and consequence, those who can better estimate the true worth of life will seek enjoyment in virtuous energies, that is, what consists "in our own exertions, not in our property or possessions." These can only belong to the good man, and both himself and the world know that he is happy by his demonstrating them. "But he is not a good man who does not delight in good actions; for the praise of justice, of bounty, and other virtues, is vain from those who do not take pleasure in their practice."* A far surer prospect

* *Aristotle* Ethic. lib. i. § 8.—Lib. ix. § 9.

and participation of felicity than the adventitious gratifications derived from splendour, will flow from the exercise of virtuous energies, together with undisturbed philosophical contemplations, from industry, the enjoyment of domestic relations, or a chosen circle of friends. The narrowing and concentration also of all external concerns, bring them best under controul.

If princes be denied those mental qualities affording pleasure in their exercise, if they want those internal resources guiding to philosophic observation and reflection, if they have no call for the occupation of time in interesting pursuits, if they do not partake of the friendship of a chosen few, nor are bound up within the sphere of their own relations, which is scarcely compatible with their condition, their enjoyments necessarily should be fewer than those of their subjects. We are therefore led to conclude, that those felicities which render existence most endearing, are more sparingly distributed to the great.

“Whom do you esteem the happiest of men,” said Cræsus to Solon, after his treasures, pomp, and power had been displayed before him?—“O, King!” the sage replied, “I esteem one Tellus, an Athenian, the happiest. He belonged to a good government, his children were fair and virtuous, and they survived himself. His own death was glorious; for having routed the enemies of his country, he fell in battle, and was honoured with public obsequies.”

So he recounted other things of Tellus.—“ And whom do you esteem the next happiest?” resumed Cræsus, little doubting that it would be himself. But Solon named other two Greeks, who had experienced a fortunate event in life, and had died in tranquillity. Cræsus now impatiently exclaimed, “ Athenian! does our own felicity seem so low in thy estimation, that it cannot admit of comparison with that of private men!” Whereupon Solon explained, that happiness depended neither on power nor riches, and that human life was so liable to reverses and accidents, that no one could be judged happy before the hour of his death. Cræsus did not forget the words of Solon, when the mutability of his fortune had proved the vanity of human wishes, and when nothing but inevitable destruction appeared before him.*

It must not be believed that the greatest dwell in more security than the humblest of men. Many stand ever on the brink of a precipice; the sword unsheathed is suspended over their heads. Though the rod of the despot be the signal for desolation, the despot himself leans only for sanction, he is dependent entirely on his inferiors. Let their support be withdrawn, he is annihilated. What is royalty itself, stripped of its external covering? Are gold and purple so essential to conceal the weakness of majesty?—A king despoiled of his

* *Herodotus*, lib. i. § 30, 86. p. 14, 43.

kingdom, the great deprived of their grandeur, are the most helpless of beings. The crowds of flatterers and parasites, those who were so lavish of homage, quickly vanish, for they have nothing to receive: their single tie to the giver was his gifts: His luxuries are diminished, his comforts are taken away, necessities press upon him, and more severely for mental resources nor personal qualities are present to offer consolatory substitutions. He is abject in his downfall.—What remains but the naked man!

Greatness therefore is an artificial state, which one who holds by it alone owns no realities to sustain.

Reader, we have instanced monarchs because they are the first; and being the first, in the vulgar eye they ought to be the happiest of men. There is no line to stretch beyond them. But greatness is a relative character: the humble are dependant on themselves, the great are dependant on their inferiors, and the precarious station of some suspends them between both. Sovereigns are the first of men no longer than the people they govern permit their eminence.

The humble, we say, are dazzled by the splendour of the great. Beholding their elevation from a respectful distance, they mistake the tinsel glittering around their trappings for genuine ore: they assume that they must be happy, because thousands bow before them; because wanting nothing, nothing is owing by them; because they have no responsibilities, yet enjoy every prerogative.

Unless from the purest patriotism, perhaps it is seldom wise to solicit office.

The higher the office, it should be attended by the greater anxieties; because more are interested in the suitable discharge of the duty. "Do not you know, my son," said Antigonus, "that our reign is nothing but a splendid slavery?"* How can the cares of sovereignty be few? We cannot delight in what is merely ceremonious: they have made many miserable. The great must watch while others sleep: they must put out the torch of discord which others are lighting: they must dissemble, for candour is often unwelcome: they are compelled to promise while incapable to perform, and to breathe the menace of war though peace be their rejoicing. "Kings have to deal with their neighbours, their wives, their children; their prelates or clergy; their nobles or gentleman, their merchants, their commons, their men of war; and from all these arise dangers if circumspection be not used."† Isaac Angelus, the emperor of the East, weighing the crown in his hand, called it a beautiful burden, which loaded more than it adorned.

Yet where the most eminent have been truly virtuous, they have held that their station imposed a duty on them, which should be discharged for the benefit of mankind. As if truly the next to

* *Ælian Variæ Historiæ*, lib. ii. cap. 20.

† *Bacon, Essays*, § 19.

divinity, they took pleasure by exercising the highest prerogatives in providing for human felicities. There have been princes who from the cradle testified the happiest dispositions, maturing with their maturity: who were carefully trained by their parents and guardians, to pass a noviciate in moral virtue, taught the value of self-control and temperance: the seeds of courage, justice, and mercy were duly cultivated; and they felt that it became them to do according as they would expect to be done to. Even philosophers have filled the throne. But as the highest qualifications are those the rarest dispensed to men, few such gems have irradiated the world.—The rivals of Antoninus and Julian in ancient, of Frederic and Catherine in modern times, are scarcely to be told.* But the latter survived in a fortunate æra.

But it is rather by taking all the circumstances attached to each individual into account, and especially the vicissitudes of life, that we are enabled to obtain the rate of equality, than by looking to prosperity only. For although adversity be universally patent, we can scarcely estimate how far mankind are actually prosperous, from not knowing the exact enjoyments which they reap from their condition. The personal security of the great seems no

* *Eutropius Breviarium*, lib. x. cap. 8: This author, who says he accompanied Julian in the expedition against the Parthians, where he fell, must have been familiar with his character, and compares him to Antoninus.

better guarded than that of the meaner people. They often hold a place of which there are many jealous, and which the ambitious would gladly infringe. None but the wicked will wound the humble: envy and emulation arouse temptations to injure the great.

Instead of being a protection from danger, or an alleviation of calamity, royalty seems to have aggravated both: and certainly monarchs have been kept on a par with other men. Many have died a violent death, which, had they been subjects, they might have escaped; many to whom death would have been welcome, have not found a friendly hand to give it. Privation, insult, and indignity, have sunk them with the lowest; for adversity is a universal leveller.

Those sovereigns intrrenching themselves with power, never were safest from assault; for he lives most secure who enjoys the affections and the esteem of the people. Aristippus, after destroying his whole enemies in the city of Argos, would not suffer his guards to do their duty beside him, and slept in an apartment which he reached by a trap-door and a ladder; "whereas Aratus, who acquired a lasting command, not by force of arms, but by virtue, and in a way agreeable to the laws, who made his appearance without fear, in a plain vest and cloak, and always shewed himself an enemy to tyranny, left an illustrious posterity among the Greeks." The only real *Ægis* is in the love of the multitude;

for the father who is venerated will be defended by his children. The noble sentiments of loyalty, the fervent devotion, the faithful attachment, and willing sacrifice of many brave men for their suffering sovereigns, have afforded a grand display of the virtuous passions of the mind. Persecution, proscription, bonds and death, have all been preferred to the forfeiture of allegiance. Why should the ruler not live in security, who lives in the heart of the loyal? "But of those who have seized castles, who have maintained guards, who have fenced themselves with arms, and gates, and barricadoes, how few can we reckon up that have not, like timorous hares, died a violent death? And not one of them has left a family or even a monument, to preserve his name with honour."*

What comparison can be held between the pomp, the splendour, and prerogative of royalty, and the peaceful retirement of humble life? Where is the profit of commanding millions, if only to retain superfluous possessions, or if their owner be not conscious that he can sleep in safety? Better it were that he wanted all his greatness; that he had none from whom to exact obedience; that he had no anxieties to disturb his repose. Bajazet, a powerful monarch, while leading a numerous army, envied a shepherd whose pipe he listened to on a neighbouring hill, saying, "O, happy shepherd, who had no cities to lose!"† The contests of the humble ex-

* *Plutarch in vita Arati.*

† *Knolles, Turkish History, vol. i. p. 149.*

tend no farther than themselves ; the contests of the great, along with themselves, involve a common desolation. Bajazet, after combating bravely, was defeated by the ambitious Timur, and taken prisoner in his flight. His hands were bound, and he was led into the presence of the conqueror ; but Timur, magnanimous in victory, received him with respect, and freeing him of his fetters, seated him by his side. While treated with suitable dignity, Bajazet was mildly charged with having occasioned the war. " But the world is so unstable," says the historian, " that it may be rather called the scene of constant destruction than an agreeable abode, since God alone endures. So it was discovered in the death of Bajazet, which soon ensued at Ak-shehr. Timur was deeply affected : he even wept for that great Prince, exclaiming, " We come from God, we return to him !"*

Of all enjoyments, that which should be the least envied is sovereignty : of all burdens, the heaviest to be borne is a crown. " O more noble than happy ornament, did any one intimately know what thou art, what is the multitude of cares, of dangers, and miseries, whereby thou art attended, none would lift thee up when cast upon the ground !"† So spoke a monarch when the diadem was offered to

* *Chereffeddin Histoire de Timur Bec*, tom. iv. p. 60—65. He was taken in 1412, and died in 1413.

† *Valerius Maximus*, lib. vii. cap. 2. § 5 : *De sapienter dictis et factis*.

his head. Is it not an intolerable punishment, as in a modern Eastern state, that the moment the supremacy opens, he who is to fill it must be committed to perpetual imprisonment, while its functions are discharged by another under the specious name of his minister? Is not a terrible penalty annexed to birth, in privation of the most precious organs of the human frame, to be plunged in eternal night, merely that the royal sufferer shall be precluded from injuring his nearest kindred if he desired it? Nay, it has been told, that all the brothers of him who succeeds to the throne of Sennaar, must perish by an act of government.* In ordinary life, the fortune of relatives is the subject of rejoicing; but in such countries, the attainment of eminence seems to beget plots and hostility; inverting the dictates of nature, those who, in every other rank, would cherish and love each other, are there rendered dangerous and implacable enemies. Princes, thus compelled by peril, have recourse to severity; and even despots have called those wretched who would not credit conspiracies until falling under them.†

The misfortunes, privations, and indignities, to which the greatest and most prosperous have been exposed from plots and wars, and often their own indiscretions, prove how elusory is the tenure of dig-

* *Poncet, Voyage to Æthiopia*, p. 28.

† *Suetonius in vita Domitiani*, § 21.

nity, that rank, nor power, nor riches can guarantee either liberty or safety. The humble can hide their head though bowed down by affliction, and mourn their fate in secret. Humility screens them from observation. Narrow sources having fed their enjoyments, they cannot be liable to many losses: never having been high, they cannot be lowered. Privacy in their grief is a privilege denied to the great: all can read their sorrow in their ~~fallen~~ greatness. So does affliction seem to press heavier on the great than on the humble.

The calm enjoyments of private life are better than artificial splendour, for they are more permanent; they may be agreeably enlarged, nor are they the subject of envy. Those who stand on the highest pinnacle of prosperity are the most in peril; for changes cannot raise their fortune, though it be always liable to depression. Equanimity is preferable to greatness; for many will succeed in robbing the great of their possessions, but none can bereave them of their philosophy. Prosperity is a treacherous education, adversity a faithful school: Yet prosperity, which blinds us to the truth, which preys on our weakness, which disorders the mind in false views of ourselves, is held by the vulgar as the greatest of the external gifts of fortune.* There is an equilibrium in the totality of the go-

* *Cicero de Amicitia*, § 15: Non enim ipsa Fortuna cæca est, sed eos etiam plerumque efficit cæcos.

vernment of the world which cannot be disturbed. If our elevation be very sudden and extraordinary, the tenure of felicity should be proportionally slender: nor are we to be buoyed up by success, as if believing heaven would be averse to our fall. Philosophy alone, not pride and presumption, will teach us resignation to bear reverses when they come. What we erroneously denominate by the name of casualties, though resulting from the nature and constitution of things, are softened by preparation for their occurrence. The objects of our desires are transient: those of our fondest affections are frail and mortal; we are less shocked and surprized by their removal, when constantly reflecting on the uncertainty of their stay.* What although our prosperity be interrupted, shall we not hope for its renewal? What although our possessions be impaired, have we not resignation to sustain us? What although we are bereft of our beloved, ought we not to rejoice in their happier life? These are prerogatives beyond human invasion. While violently despoiled of all besides, our philosophy is still our own.

The abode of fortune cannot be controuled: the more lavish her favours, the less likelihood that the necessary intermixture of good and evil in sublunary affairs will admit of their permanence. Intolerable pride alone can induce us to suppose our

* *Epictetus* Enchiridion, § 8.

properties merit the uninterrupted favour of heaven, as consciousness, together with the narrowest self-introspection, will shew that divine justice can find many of better desert. Amasis, a wise monarch, told another who had enjoyed much prosperity, that he would prefer some reverses for himself and his friends; for he held a continued state of felicity in great suspicion, nor had he ever heard of any one who, after success in every thing, escaped destruction at last.*

It is thus that the conditions of the world are equalized: High to-day; low to-morrow. Those who seemingly have the firmest hold of Fortune, have it the soonest wrested from them. Darius was mortally wounded on the plains of Arbela; and after a search by the victorious army, he was found "extended on his chariot, and pierced with many darts." Though near his last moments, he had strength to ask for something to quench his thirst. A Macedonian, named Polystratus, brought him some cold water; and when he had drank he said, "Friend, this fills up the measure of my misfortune—to think that I am not able to reward thee for this act of kindness. But Alexander will not let thee go without a recompence, and the Gods will reward Alexander for his humanity to my mother, my wife, and my children. Tell him, I gave him my hand, for I give it thee in

* *Herodotus*, lib. iii. § 40. p. 216. *Strabo*, lib. xiv. tom. 11. p. 945.

his stead." So saying, he took the hand of Polystratus, and immediately expired.* Thus was this potent monarch sunk lower than the Macedonian soldier; for he could not requite the most humble boon, a draught of that limpid element which all the creatures of the earth can command. The soldier was happier in preserving his own life and freedom, and in having benevolently relieved the dying king.

Men inflated by vanity have called themselves the sons of Heaven, and proud in prosperity have claimed kindred with the gods, while all the multifarious maladies prepared to gnaw the human frame were ready to prostrate them with their native dust. They forgot mortality. Sesostrius, King of Egypt, a mighty conqueror, substituted four captive princes for the horses of his chariot while going to the temple, that he might seem the first of mankind: yet, after a long and prosperous reign, he lost his sight, and closed existence in suicide.†

The fate of Darius was happy compared with that of many captives; and Sesostrius might have fallen by a more cruel hand than his own. When Valerian the Roman Emperor was taken by Sapor, King of Persia, "so long as he lived, the King, putting his foot on his neck as he bowed down,

* *Plutarch* in vita Alexandri. Others of the ancients relate various anecdotes to shew that Darius was truly of a generous disposition, from his gratitude for services received.

† *Diodorus Siculus*, lib. i. § 58. tom. i. p. 68.

mounted his horse.* The captors of Jugurtha, King of Numidia, were so impatient for spoil, that they tore off part of his ear for the sake of obtaining its ornament.† The assassin of Artaxerxes Ochus, by a new species of vengeance, converted his bones to the hilts of swords, as the savage wears those of his enemies for a trophy; and few who have fallen into the hands of exasperated subjects, or resentful foes, have died an easy death.‡

The more illustrious the captive, the greater the pride of the victor; for the humble never were reserved for triumphs; and though a prostrate enemy should disarm anger, magnanimity has been less conspicuous than revenge. Contempt and scorn, and barbarous pleasure in the humiliation of the great, are the reproach of their meaner tyrants:—"Call for Samson," cried his enemies, "that he may make us sport."

Perseus, King of Macedonia, was defeated, made prisoner, and carried to Rome, where he was at first cast into a loathsome dungeon along with common malefactors, and reduced to the misery of beseeching them for a small portion of their own pittance of food. While charitably bestowing it, they at the same time offered him the means of committing suicide, as if his life had not been worth

* *Estropius Breviarium*, lib. ix. cap. 6.

† *Ælian Variæ Historiæ*, lib. vi. cap. 8.

‡ *Nicetas Historia*, lib. ii. § 12, of the Emperor Andronicus. *Nicephorus Historia*, p. 26, of Justinian II.

preserving. But the ancients infer, that he wanted courage to depart. Transported to less rigorous confinement, he provoked his keepers, who having no other method of wreaking their vengeance, it is alleged, than keeping him continually from sleep, he perished under this unexampled punishment.*

It was not without reason, that, amidst the derision to which the captive Dionysius was exposed, he said to one who questioned him on the benefit he had derived from Plato, "Do you think that we have derived no benefit from Plato, when we bear in this manner such a change of fortune?" With powerful fleets and numerous armies, defended by strong walls and warlike engines, Dionysius believed himself invulnerable. But the state he held was too artificial to be permanent, if wanting illustrious descent or moral virtue makes Fortune fickle. For his father, being a man of mean extraction, became a General in the Syracusan army, and gradually invested himself with the government, which, after a long reign, he transmitted to his son. Dionysius, like the ruler of Argos, was full of suspicious alarm. He would not confide in strangers or domestics, but compelled his daughters, it is said, to perform some menial offices

* *Diodorus Siculus*, lib. xxxi. § 2. tom. ii. p. 515. He was imprisoned in a dungeon deep in the earth.—*Plutarch* in *vita Pauli Æmilii*.—In the course of the seventeenth century, it was not an uncommon kind of torture practised in Britain, to prevent persons suspected of witchcraft from falling asleep.

about his person : and as they grew up he burnt off his beard, because he thought they were not to be trusted with an edged instrument. The apartment wherein he slept was guarded by a draw-bridge, which he himself raised on shutting the door: and to avoid personal exposure to danger, he was accustomed to hold his conferences from a lofty tower. The territories of Dionysius having been invaded, he was totally overthrown ; and the Locrians, offended at the indignities to which he had subjected their wives and children, took a barbarous revenge. His family was rooted out : his sons were destroyed before him, his daughters violated and slain, and the rites of sepulture were denied to all his offspring. Dionysius himself was carried to Corinth, where on his arrival there was scarcely a person in Greece who was not desirous of seeing and of discoursing with him. " Some hating the man, and rejoicing at his misfortunes, came for the pleasure of insulting him in his present distress: others, whose sentiments with respect to him were somewhat changed, and who were touched with compassion for his fate, plainly saw the influence of an invisible and divine power displayed in the affairs of mortals. For neither nature nor art displayed in those times any thing so remarkable as that work of fortune which shewed the man who was lately sovereign of Sicily now holding conversation in a butcher's shop at Corinth, or sitting whole days in that of a perfumer, or drinking the diluted wine of the taverns,

or squabbling in the streets with lewd women, or directing female musicians in their singing, and disputing with them seriously about the harmony of certain airs that were sung in the theatre." Some affirm, that from his necessities he beat a drum at certain religious festivals, an employment allotted only to persons of vile and degraded condition: others allege, that he took up a school at Corinth, and falling into extreme poverty, at length died at an advanced age.* Whatever were the fortunes or the defects of Dionysius, it is universally allowed that he endured his reverses with resignation.

But how many, incapable of such submissions to fate, or terrified for human vengeance, have lifted their hands against themselves?

A more copious retrospect of the history of ancient nations, would show innumerable examples of the mutability of fortune, which reduced the condition of sovereigns far beneath that of their subjects. Nor is modern Europe, or any other quarter of the globe, barren of illustrations.

But it is remarkable, that magnanimity has scarcely ever abandoned the European monarchs in their extremities; and few, if any, have commit-

* *Diodorus Siculus*, lib. xvi. § 70. tom. ii. p. 137. et var. al. loc. *Justin*, lib. xxi. cap. 6. *Ælian*, *Varie Historie*, lib. vi. cap. 12.—viii. cap. 8. *Plutarch* in *vita Timoleontis*. *Althe-næus*, lib. xii. cap. 58. *Cicero*, *Tuscul. Quest.* lib. iii. § 12: Lib. v. § 20—23.

ted suicide. There is scarcely an instance of one having descended to meanness in his pursuits. They have struggled courageously for the retention or the resumption of their dignity: if vanquished, they yielded with fortitude: if retiring to private life, they have passed it irreproachably.

Public commotions are the most dangerous to the great; for their condition being artificial, it is the readiest to be shaken. Sovereigns, who enjoyed transcendent glory, have been sunk in obscurity, or content to beg a pittance for charity of that profusion which they lavished on their subjects. Zenobia was led before the triumphal car of Aurelian from the head of legions, and changed the palaces of Palmyra for a life of privacy in the neighbourhood of Rome, where her posterity subsisted long after.* The Empress Irene, while in the plenitude of power, was drawn in a golden chariot by four white horses; but dethroned and exiled to the island of Metelin, some say she had to earn a livelihood by her distaff.† The Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus was first reduced to seek subsistence by manual labour, and being skilled in painting he gladly sold his works. "Who would believe it," exclaims Mezeray of Charles le Gros, "were it not certified by all the historians of his time, that there did not remain to him a single ser-

* *Eutropius Breviarium*, lib. ix. cap. 10.

† *Historiæ Miscellæ*, lib. xxiii.

vant to receive his commands, or a single farthing to purchase his subsistence—a prince who had been the most powerful on the earth, free of any prominent vice, but with many Christian virtues, for he was good, and just, and devout!” Forsaken by his people, he wandered over the very country he had ruled in quest of an asylum; and at length taking refuge in a poor village of Suabia, he fell into such obscurity that the very place of his decease is scarcely known.* After a series of adversities, Henry IV, Emperor of Germany, is said to have besought admission, merely for the sake of bread, as a chorister in the church of Spires, founded by himself; which was denied him: and when he died, no one was ready to lay his head in the grave. When Charles VII. of the same nation, in later times, received the French and English officers at Frankfort, after the battle of Dettingen in 1743, “he had not wherewithal to subsist his family, no one would make him the least advance,” and he was glad to borrow on the credit of others.† Mary of Medicis, the Queen of Henry IV. who fell by the hands of an assassin, was abandoned by her own son Louis XIII. after having been regent of France, and died in indigence at Brussels in the year 1642. A few years later, Henrietta of England, who had

* *Mezeray*, Histoire de France, tom. i. p. 603, 604.—*De Serres*, Inventaire de l'Histoire de France, tom. i. fol. 136. ad an. 888, 889. *Henault*, tom. i. p. 101.

† *Private Life of Louis XV.* vol. ii. p. 156.

taken refuge in Paris, wanted money to give her son Charles II. to buy a shirt, who borrowed one, nor in the depth of winter had she a billet of wood: and on the Cardinal Retz finding her in her daughter's chamber, she said to him, "you see I have come to keep Henrietta company: the poor child has not been able to get up to-day for want of fire."* The widow of Alexis, the heir-apparent of the Russian empire, apprehensive of being involved in his fate, escaped to Paris, and ended her days in the Mauritius.†

Ancient and modern history mingle in recording the vicissitudes of the great, whereby they were levelled exactly to the ordinary condition of mankind.

The earliest records of Britain open with the same undaunted courage of her chiefs, which has passed to the people in latest posterity; showing that a magnanimous female leader would not survive her defeat: that Caractacus, whose reputation preceded him, was carried to Rome in fetters, where he stood unmoved by the reverse of his fortunes,

* *De Retz, Memoires*, tom. i. p. 234. tom. ii. p. 286. The queen of Louis XV. before her marriage wanted linen, and took refuge in a stable.

† *Arago, Voyage*, p. 131. observes, that she married a serjeant-major in a regiment sent to this island, where in 1817 he saw many persons who knew her, and that she did not disclose her rank until the decease of her second husband.

nor invited the commiseration of the victors.* Passing by the train of their descendants, in the less enlightened ages, the fate of Edward II. of England in 1327, and of Richard II. in 1399, both bereft of the crown, and falling by assassins, illustrates the calamities of the great. An uninterrupted series of wars and tumults disturbed the reign of Henry VI. in the succeeding century. The destinies of Margaret of Anjou, his queen, were remarkable. When both were precipitated from the throne, she rallied the royal forces and led them against their enemies, until her adherents were finally dispersed. Wandering in the recesses of a forest with her son, she was attacked by robbers in the night, plundered, and insulted. She escaped during their contention for the spoil, when meeting another robber with a naked sword, she claimed his protection, by acknowledging the rank of her son. The man, not insensible to humanity, succoured both. Some time subsequent, Margaret was enabled to quit the kingdom and reach her father's court, from whence having returned, she was still pursued by adverse fortune; and being taken prisoner, she was confined several years in the Tower. At last having been liberated through the mediation of the King of France, her future life was peacefully occupied until she deceased in 1482.

* *Tacitus Annales*, lib. xii. cap. 36; xiv. cap. 35—37.—*In vita Agricola*, cap. 16.

A retrospect of the history of the northern part of this island during the same century, shows equal calamities allotted to its princes in every generation. In the year 1436, James I. perished by the hand of conspirators; and, omitting the accidental death of his son in 1460, his grandson James III. defeated in a rebellion, was slain in an obscure place, where he had taken refuge in 1488. As if misfortune had been entailed on the name, the son of this monarch fell with the flower of his people in battle in the year 1513. It was the fate of Mary, the only remaining scyon of the race, to leave the most polished country for her own dominions; to be involved in the tumultuous factions of subjects emerging from barbarism, reviled and insulted on account of her religion, expelled her kingdom, and after courting an asylum from her nearest relation, kept eighteen years in captivity, and cruelly brought to the scaffold on false pretences of hostility to that jealous rival. But blood had been flowing copiously in Britain from religious zeal and civil persecution. Queens, and statesmen, and nobles had fallen under the axe of the executioner, first sharpened by a merciless tyrant. The fervour of contention was abating in the succeeding century, when the nation was doomed to behold the sanguinary scenes of former times renewed in the public sacrifice of distinguished men, and the rage of intestine commotions. The government was overthrown, the head of the state perished by mutiny of its members,

and all his adherents were singled out for vengeance. Happily no political convulsion has seriously disturbed the nation since its tranquillity was composed in the year 1660. Twice the petty standard of revolt has been raised by those who had sworn allegiance to a former dynasty; but events unimportant in themselves may now be consigned to oblivion. The lapse of a century is rapidly advancing since any person of real distinction has suffered for a political offence; and we are safe to predict, that the King of Great Britain never will be endangered by his subjects, if he governs them with paternity.

While Britain has reposed in peace, the most grievous calamities have visited the sovereigns of other countries in the most recent times. Some have been despoiled of their territories, some have perished from private conspiracies, some have been brought to the scaffold as a spectacle to their rebellious subjects.

If rebellion be odious, it is because it resembles the act of the parricide in wounding the protector. Yet when, instead of paternal love, dominion fosters tyranny, then, by a desperate alternative, the members of the commonwealth cannot be otherwise preserved than by destroying their ruler. If the shock do not menace universal dissolution, sometimes as personal health is restored by parting with a distempered organ, so is the vigour of the body politic renewed by losing the faulty portion.

Two kings of Persia perished thus from their own iniquities. But the first only when "his mur-

ders were no longer confined to individuals, the inhabitants of whole cities were massacred, and even left their abodes, and took up their habitations in caverns and deserts, in hopes of escaping his savage ferocity." Some officers of his court proscribed, destroyed their master to save themselves.* After the interval of a benignant reign, another monster in human shape ascended the throne. Two of his attendants, also proscribed, struck him to the heart while asleep in his tent, in the year 1797.† Still later, the sovereign of an adjacent kingdom falling into the hands of a competitor for the throne, his eyes were pierced with a lancet, and he was fated to perpetual imprisonment.‡ The mutability of fortune never was more conspicuous than among the rulers of the Turkish empire. Selim III. a mild and pacific prince, who seemed to alleviate the ferocity of his people, was dethroned during a sudden insurrection in the capital: and afterwards retreating to his private apartments, was barbarously slain while in an attitude of devotion. His successor was as unfortunate, for after a brief success, he was led to confinement, and on renewed insurrections experienced a similar fate in the year 1808.§

Returning nearer home, the struggles of Poland for liberty, are found exciting the cupidity of neigh-

* *Hanway*, British Trade over the Caspian Sea, var. loc.

† *Malcolm*, History of Persia, vol. ii. p. 99, 300.

‡ *Elphinstone*, Account of the Kingdom of Caubul, p. 577.

§ *Hobhouse*, Journey in Albania, Let. 51. vol. ii. p. 1037, 1044.

bouring states. Successive Emperors of Russia also have been cut off: and Sweden has proved still more unhappy. "How can assassins be present amidst such festivities!" cried Gustavus III. in mixing with the joyous throng at a public entertainment. But he had hardly spoken when he fell by a mortal wound from private resentment, or the result of a conspiracy in the year 1792.* His reputed son and successor was dethroned in 1809.

It was reserved for a nation the most polished throughout the world, to cloud its reputation by works of iniquity, not of a day when the angry mental tumult has had time to subside, but preserved for years. Already have we had too frequent occasion to illustrate the deplorable consequences of yielding to the most inveterate passions from the same never-failing source. Though a veil be drawn over the regicide of revolutionary France, æras will elapse before her crimes, debasing the human name, can fall into the darker shades of oblivion.

These brief observations shall close the catalogue of royal calamities, amply proving that the greatest of the great are thus, and by other means, brought down to the ordinary level of men. Reflecting on the concomitants of greatness, on the vacancy and impatience, on the insincerity of the selfish, the importunities of the capricious, the liability to odium

* *Bouillé*, Memoirs relating to the French Revolution, p. 469. et seq. *Brown*, Northern Courts, vol. ii. p. 159—202, exhibits a more copious detail.

and envy, all in its train, the wise never will wish for that kind of eminence. "Who is there holding any converse with the Muses, with humanity and principle, who would not rather have been Archimedes than Dionysius? Looking to the life and the actions of the one, his mind is seen to have been nourished by erudition and industry; the other was occupied with slaughter and injury, and a prey to daily and nightly terrors. Behold, Pythagoras, Democritus, and Anaxagoras, what are the kingdoms, what the riches, to be preferred to their studies and pursuits?"* If occupation and confidence, if energy and the pleasures consequent on success, if tranquillity and rational enjoyments be the chief ingredients of happiness, it is not evident how this can be peculiarly reserved for the great.

Some, accordingly, taking a more philosophic view of the best and most profitable kind of life, weary of the anxieties of state, disgusted with the intrigues in which they were themselves to be the objects ultimately deceived, have renounced the throne, and sought peace in retirement. They have there found real felicity in the abandonment of that pomp, and power, and prerogative which, in removing them to the most artificial condition, harboured all its mutabilities in secret. Dioclesian, who ruled the most powerful of empires, "grew old as a private individual near Salona," after having voluntarily demitted the sceptre. Being importuned to resume

* *Cicero Quest. Tusc. lib. v. § 20—23.*

it, he contented himself with answering: "If you were at Salona to see the herbs cultivated by my hands, you would agree with me that I ought not to comply."* Several of the Roman emperors in the later ages, forsook the cares of monarchy, and shaving their heads retired to religious contemplation in monasteries.† In the ruder parts of Europe, a small and sanctified spot, the island Iona, afforded a common asylum to the northern potentates, when dignity and splendour had lost their charms, or the thrones its stability. Hither they withdrew to a state of undisturbed repose, to practise monastic discipline, and leave their ashes in consecrated ground.

A few indeed, because they did not sufficiently know themselves, have been disappointed of that satisfaction which they desired and expected, from retreating to private life. They failed, like a celebrated emperor of more modern times, to plan their employments before putting their retirement in practice.

Princes are the greatest of the great; but gradually descending, the same mutabilities are incident to all beneath them, whose eminence is reared on artificial foundations. All are liable to downfall as their props are removed; all are doomed to personal afflictions. Besides the vicissitudes of fortune, the high, the low, the rich, and

* *Sextus Aurelius Victor*, cap. 39.—*Historiæ Miscellæ*, lib. x.

† *Zonaras Annales*, var. loc.

the poor, are reduced to perfect equality by the visitations of nature, against which there is no appeal. Every personal imperfection to which men are liable, is alike severe on the great as on the humble; and if they shall mitigate them, it is by palliatives for which others have better means to heal their wounds. Nature is alike in the king as in the peasant. There are some afflictions, which only patience, fortitude, and resignation, can enable either to endure: others are beyond human consolation. Is not a monarch bereft of reason a more object being than the humblest peasant in his dominions? nay, an object fit for the peasant's pity?

Do not let us suppose that greatness goes further than to affect our external relations: it lies but in the show, not in the substance of things. The possessions of the world are unequally distributed; so are our desires after wealth and rank, or honour or adulation, all that can sustain us in a certain sphere, or bring us enjoyment. Mankind rise over each other till they can rise no higher. Intoxicated with glory, they awaken to find it a dream; whereas, contemplating those circumstances coolly which have led them to it, they would have anticipated that other circumstances, by its evanescence, are ever prepared to reconduct them to that level which is the proper condition of mortals. But nature is only modified; it never alters. The child untutored is the same throughout the world; rank is neither a real ingredient of felicity, nor any protection from pain. The most sovereign prince,

whose splendour shines in the universe, is not in possession of more genuine enjoyments than the peasant: he cost his mother the same throes to give him to the light as are shared by the humblest of her sex.

Shall we now be allowed as an interlude, to digress to another branch of no mean importance in our enquiries, regarding the natural penalties imposed on mankind, and then resume their artificial prospects?

But are the dispensations of nature actually ever unequal? Does she niggardly close her hand to one, while lavishing her bounties to another?—On beholding a miserable, defective, distorted being, we are ready to exclaim, “better it were that the wretch had never been born!” But we are too presumptuously deciding on the works of Providence: rashly assuming that each vice and virtue is alike unreservedly revealed, and that no secret qualities remain for disclosure. Here the universal equilibrium would seem to be disturbed. If all the contrivances regarding animated existence, however, be favourable, in so far as can be ascertained, something is now disguised, and may be laid open by research, as we are bound to put a good construction on what we cannot find. It is the soul, and not the body, which is best in man. “Certainly there is a consent between the body and the mind; where nature erreth in the one, she ventureth in the other.”* Felicity can come only of the soul.

* *Bacon, Essays, § 44.*

How can we believe their personal imperfections to be productive of hopeless misery, when witnessing so great a portion of tranquillity enjoyed by those deprived of the most precious organs! In truth, there seems an universal order of compensation, whereby gentle compassion benevolently allows a substitute for what is absent or taken away. Passing over the prodigies of nature, this should be held the strongest of all evidence of the existence of a Power supremely just.

The body is but an external covering, susceptible of every varied modification in defect or redundancy of which its limits permit. The soul is unbounded by confines: swelling into invisible, immaterial, immeasurable immensity, it cannot be restrained. It is uncontrollable. It is the author of tranquillity, peace, and comfort. Rising in dignified sublimity, its energies contemplate heaven, hold fortune in contempt, and the body in subordination. Thus it becomes the source and the abode of a refined principle of felicity, far different from that which springs of sensual enjoyments.

Strength and beauty, qualities to the owner indeed, but more fugitive than mental excellence, are denied to the person. The weak and the defective are exposed to inconveniences: their health may be impaired, and they must continue to wait for what others can easily get, whereby they would seem to suffer. But commonly they have substitutes for their imperfections at command; and if

the asperities of their condition appear unconquerable, they are never seen deficient in fortitude, which, by softening their evils, compels us to admire its exhaustless stores. The higher we climb the mountain, we gain the purer sky: as labour refines the intellect, so does personal sufferance contribute to polish the mind: And at length it is discovered, "that existence is not the gift superlative unless when accompanied by qualities."* Those to whom uninterrupted health and fancied prosperity have been allotted, perhaps may find it difficult to reconcile these principles with the feelings and sentiments wherein they have hitherto indulged; because they have gratuitously allied imperfections with misery. Let them investigate the real circumstances of human life, they may be assured that ready conviction of the reverse will follow. What other created beings are furnished with identically the same external organs as man? There are none: yet they originate, they grow, they flourish, and they perform all the functions which are essential to their welfare. If certain genera have become extinct, it is not because their own structure was gradually tending to their extirpation. One who is suddenly deprived of the use of an important organ, who is maimed or accidentally disfigured for life, at first bemoans his loss as irreparable. It is reasonable that he should regret what has proved useful. But in the

* *Plato de Legibus*, lib. v.



new train of sentiment following every incident, he enquires whether his case can be alleviated : he ruminates on the means : he finds it attainable,—or he becomes reconciled to it if otherwise : Yet, without much consideration, he cannot fail to discover, that there is no definite proportion between the body and the soul ; that the former is under the guidance of the latter, and if parts have been taken away, he asks how those remaining shall be directed. All the benefits of life are not derived from personal dexterity, but infinite profits are consequent on the cultivation of the mind. The senses are turned to new account, functions are performed without important organs that never were thought of with them ; and, which is still more consolatory, the defect, instead of impairing, seems to be the medium of promoting felicity. Remarkable examples could be given. The author has seen delicate accomplishments in the arts executed to perfection, by persons who never had arms whereby to imitate others.*

When told of a blind statuary excelling in sculpture, or listening to the knowledge dealt out by philosophers labouring under a similar privation, and beholding the ingenious inventions of the deaf, we cannot but wonder at the resolute conversion of their talents to use. Their concern has been far

* The author has had an opportunity of seeing two females, the one named Beffin, the other Bagshaw, both most accomplished in the arts, though labouring under incredible imperfections.

less about their misfortunes, than how they could be remedied. Charges of no small importance have rewarded the merits of individuals wanting some of the most precious senses. Sometimes they have con-

The former wanted arms and legs from her birth; only a very short stump issued from each shoulder, by means of which, combined with the aid of her mouth and tongue, she could perform all the usual feminine occupations; and, besides, was a painter of beautiful miniatures.—The latter was a native of America, and of a more sprightly temper. She was born without arms, yet executed the finest embroidery, and every kind of knitting or needle-work, by means of her toes and her mouth. Like the other, she wrote a very current hand, and could also draw. The frequency of similar imperfections is remarkable.—Ancient history speaks of an expert archer named Herman, who wanted his arms by the shoulders: *Strabo*, lib. xv. tom. ii. p. 1048: *Dio*, lib. liv. § 9.—*L'Etoile* saw a native of Nantes in the year 1586, who wrote very well without arms, and exhibited various feats of dexterity: *Journal*, tom. i. p. 116. *Scaliger* speaks of a Dutch woman labouring under a similar defect; and of two men, whose dexterity, by means of their feet, rivalled that of others with their hands: *Comment.* in lib. v. *Manilii*. One of the latter is described by *Philip Camerarius*; and another, a Swede, as writing in different characters with the feet, as well as practising several adroit performances: *Opera Subseciva*, cap. 37. An English traveller details the various feats of a German female wanting hands, which he witnessed at Parma in 1665. She knit a stocking with her feet, strung beads, and worked them into a purse: she turned a small wheel with one foot, and spun with the other: she could write well, and played on several instruments: *Skippon*, *Journey through the Low Countries, Germany, Italy, and France*. *Casaubon* says, he saw a man wanting arms, “who wrote not amiss with his feet;” and the author has seen the finest specimens of chirography in the



tributed to entertainment where they could not dispense learning, and all have been more occupied in benefiting their neighbours than in bemoaning themselves.*

Greek, Roman, and Italic character, and various drawings with a pen, executed by Matthew Buckinger, a German, wanting both hands and feet, who visited Britain in the year 1723.—*Dr Hibbert*, an intelligent observer, has very recently communicated to the public the case of a youth wanting the fore-arms, and quotes some other instances illustrative of the expedients resorted to for remedying similar imperfections: Transactions of the Wernerian Society, vol. iv. p. 449. In so far as the author could observe, the mouth was the chief substitute for the defective organization seen by him, and the tongue in particular was converted to an instrument of wonderful utility. It took up a needle, which the lips stuck into the sleeve of one of the stumps of the arms of the females first described, and then introduced a thread through the eye.

* *Chardin*, the Eastern traveller, was acquainted with *Mirza Resi*, a blind Persian Prince, learned in Algebra and Mathematics. "He was passionately fond of watches, of which he exhibited above 200, and was perfectly acquainted with their structure. Though all the different parts were intermingled together, he could put up or take down the smallest watch, and that so adroitly and expeditiously, that had it not been for the bandage covering his eyes, no one would have thought him blind." Voyages, tom. viii. p. 33.—Some years ago, *Dr Moyes* not only shewed himself a good practical mechanic in this country, but delivered Lectures on Natural Philosophy and Chemistry.—In the preceding century, *Dr Saunderson*, also blind, occupied a Professor's chair in the University of Cambridge, and has left some learned works.—*Cicero*, indeed, speaks of a blind mathematician, who lived many years in his house, and taught Geometry: *Quest. Tusc. lib. v. § 39.*

It is affirmed that the number of blind persons in the city

Spite of the opposition apparently offered by nature, niggardly of her external ornaments, the defective are thus able to gain valuable attainments, not only to soothe their misfortune, but to contribute to their own felicity, and that of those to whom, by imparting them, they contribute convenience, intelligence, and consolation. Shall we continue to insist, that, with all their imperfections, they are lowered beneath the ordinary standard of mankind? On the contrary, by displaying talents refused to the multitude, by evidently enjoying more tranquillity from their abundant resources, are we not compelled to admit their real superiority?

Many will enquire, no doubt, how it comes that individuals externally so harshly treated by nature, are able to turn her frowns to complacency? It is only by the force of the intellectual energies. Patient reflection, and ardent investigation, lead to discovery. Cultivation of the mind promotes its expansion, refinement, and polish, generating food for itself, and conveniences for the person. Sickness, the ordinary concomitant for a certain season of defective

of Yeddo, in Japan, amounts to 36,000: that the blind throughout the kingdom are united into an association, all the officers and assistants of which likewise are blind: that they are occupied in different capacities, according to their qualifications, many being physicians, especially in prescribing for diseases where the bath is deemed beneficial.—*Golownin, Recollections of Japan*, p. 219, 220.



organization, often proves the happiest discipline for mankind, as then is the period for that leisure and contemplation, teaching them philosophy, without which there can be no excellence. While those whose sweetened cup, leaving little to desire, sometimes languish for another condition, the maimed or defective have long ago reconciled themselves to their own, by finding pleasures which were not incompatible with it, on which they have improved. Their impediments, far from being the subject of uneasiness, have been the means of greater attainments, and more true felicity, than if they had been exempted from such visitations.

Nature, therefore, in refusing the usual medium of comfort by mutilating her creatures, commonly admits compensatory qualifications: and we shall find, on temperate enquiry, that cheerfulness, good humour, perseverance, industry, and learning, distinguish many of those whom she appears to have chastened in her vengeance.

But, as permanent good can come only of the mind, all this may be promoted by judicious and suitable education.

Parents mistake the imperfections decreed to their offspring, as calamities to themselves. How often does the partial mother deplore the loss of a reprobate son as the greatest affliction, while she would hesitate to offer her defective child to the public eye! She seems to feel the reproach of Heaven on herself in its infirmities, as if the body

were a better part than the soul. Yet, if the ~~soul~~ can gain so high an eminence, duty prescribes its anxious cultivation, whatever be the form wherein it has been the divine pleasure that it should be lodged. Nor ought the tender parent to hide the mutilated being ashamed of its deformity, since personal imperfections are so soon obliterated by intellectual ornament.

Riches are good if useful. If not useful, they are not good: for gold unemployed to beneficial purposes, is no better than the vilest dross. The difference between the opulent and the needy, is regulated not by their possessions, but exactly by the sphere of their respective wishes, when laudably directed. But as those of defective organisation restrict their pursuits to objects within their reach, and are content with the enjoyments they can procure, so do the prudent, to whom fortune has been sparing of wealth, endeavour for the most part to contract their desires within the compass of their means. Though the rich man can occupy a more splendid mansion, provide more sumptuous fare, and use finer apparel, the poor man dwelling in his cottage, subsisting on the produce of his industry, and clothing himself in a homespun garb, is on a perfect parity with him, provided he does not aspire beyond his station. The other will neither sleep sounder, make a more grateful meal, nor enjoy better health. Whatever exceeds our necessities, and consists in what we cannot convert to use, is



superfluous; therefore cannot contribute to our felicity, as felicity must be derived from something desirable. It is impossible to comprehend how real personal comfort can be enhanced by that which we not only have no need of, but which we virtually reject from inability to apply to any specific purpose. Our appetite satisfied, we have no craving for food: the most learned work will add nothing to our knowledge, if we are ignorant of the language in which it is written. What is the intrinsic value of wealth, neither given away nor enjoyed, nor bringing any immediate benefit? The rich are no where happier than the poor: many of them are obviously less contented: and competence, which must always be the subject of care and calculation, is turned to a much better account in general than the treasures enabling their owners to lavish them on worthless pursuits, or merely inspiring a thirst for more. The opulent sometimes become needy from their thoughtless prodigality, while the others, constantly warned how short is the way they may adventure, remain independent, or become opulent by cultivating their little store. If the majority of the world derive as much pleasure in the display as in the possession of riches, and consider prohibition to shew their wealth the same thing as taking it away, they desire it for other purposes than real benefit. It is only by enlarging our wants, that is, by passing more and more into an artificial state,

that opulence must keep pace with them, otherwise we certainly grow unhappy : and if all around us are animated by corresponding inclinations, we shall find that an absolute equalization is effected by wealth. We pursue after it instead of seeking ease or honour, in order to contribute to our enjoyments. If possession brings enjoyment, they have the greatest felicity who have the speediest success. On the other hand, those whose desires are restricted, have not yet learned that wealth confounds all ranks of men, and to the indiscriminating is the chief foundation of distinction. Though it is not to be despised from the utility to which it may be converted, wealth is not that ingredient in universal felicity which is usually believed. Mendicants are often so well content with their station, that their employment is very seldom advantageously changed. Prudence is lulled by great possessions.

Does rank contribute to comfort ? The vulgar, indeed, behold the homage which is offered to the exalted, with mingled awe and admiration : their address falters, a frown petrifies them : their love is won by trifling condescensions. A few courteous words, the moments of a flattering reception are an epoch in life. Rank, perhaps, is envied more than wealth, though every knee be bent to lucre ; for “ the prejudice in favour of the great, by the people, is so blind, and their folly for their gesture, their visage, tone of voice, and manners, so general,

that if they took care to be good, it would amount to idolatry.”*

Because an easy method of rewarding courage was anciently devised in personal distinction, the contest for place and prerogative in modern times is still as anxious if it were obtaining a declaration of merit. Each individual pitching his expectation of felicity on reaching superiority, strains to be lifted as high as his vanity and self-love would carry him, though he cannot plead that it is the recompence of honour. Thus do many urge their own inferiorities on notice, which have previously slept in dull oblivion. The object has failed. Panting after honourable distinctions which have not been duly earned, is notoriously indicative of imbecility and pride. They are a pleasure, indeed, to him who has no better claims on human estimation: he believes them evidence of his desert, though the profanation of recompence, and if they do not excite derision, the blindness of the world seems to sanction his presumption. The man of intrinsic worth will be always esteemed by his fellow-citizens; the homage of their approbation will be always voluntarily offered without his demanding an artificial elevation over them. Distinctions in this kingdom are profusely lavished, yet the demands for them are insatiable; and the privilege originally devised for distinguishing merit is grossly abused. Perhaps the truly meritorious

* *La Bruyere les Caracteres*, tom. i. p. 327.

are much less ambitious of personal distinctions than pretenders to desert; they are occupied in what shall entitle them to it: the others claim what they have not won. But they must often meet cruel mortifications, instead of enjoyment, from denial of their fancied superiority; for it is not the mere dignity, but being worthy of it, that constitutes its value. It must be a just reward.

A great philosopher seems to expect the transmission of merit by inheritance.* We cannot behold the illustrious descendant of an illustrious house, indeed, without some of that veneration which antiquity itself is prone to inspire; nor is he the same in our eyes as one who is lifted up from the grovelling mass to a station confounding him by its novelty. The renown of his progenitors seems to be renewed in himself. Like that solid fabric reared to resist the devouring lapse of time, it stands where meaner structures crumble into dust. Like the lofty oak on the mountain's brow, which bears the rude tempest unshaken while lower forests fall, his dynasty, rooted in virtue, has vigorously regenerated in revolving ages, and still remains entire.

It is doubtful whether the new attainment of rank confers the expected pleasure; and whether, like other qualities of an artificial and adventitious nature, any satisfaction originally derived from it

* *Aristotle Polit. lib. i. cap. 4.*

be not the soonest exhausted by possession. Whatever are its enjoyments, they must be imparted from the presence of society, for they cannot be procured from solitude. But no proud pre-eminence is to be compared to intrinsic virtues, and they are egregiously deceived who, crouching to the great, attach felicity to their station, for artificial conditions cannot defend invasions of tranquillity.

A young nobleman, externally of mild and pleasing manners, inherited an ample fortune to sustain his dignities. It was said to be well applied; for he was not only distinguished eminently by the virtue of hospitality, but by noted acts of benevolence, always the characteristic of the good. He was universally caressed and esteemed; his fame never was wounded by calumny, and every thing around him augured the happiest and most contented state. This young nobleman had a charming spouse, equally mild, complacent, and benevolent as himself; one endowed with the sweetest disposition: and though yet at an early age, she had blessed him with a blooming family. Possessing all that a partial destiny could bestow, there seemed no remaining wants to be supplied, no deficiencies at which to repine: the measure of felicity was overflowing: and it was not solely from the gifts of opulence, distinction by rank, and domestic harmony, but also in the estimation of the public, that his ample enjoyments consisted. But weak and delusive are human prospects. A state made up

of so many conditions, was too artificial to admit of permanence: it was reasonably to be distrusted from its prosperity.—The man whose lot might have been thought the most enviable, was covered with shame and sorrow; for the mother of his children forgot her conjugal fidelity.—

A long and uninterrupted career of felicity does not seem consistent with sublunary arrangements; nor are any of our race known to merit it. As time is divided into light and darkness, so is the lot of mankind shared in good and evil. There is an equilibrium which we may attempt to disturb, and a mediocrity which we may endeavour to overstep, but it is in vain. The very means which nature takes to restore the preponderating oscillations of fortune to rest, and reduce all things to their proper condition, shows the futility of our attempts, for they never cease. Violence may bend the stem, but the twigs will shoot upright. The weariness of our frame bids us desist from straining it beyond our strength: languor proclaims intellectual exhaustion: the cravings of hunger prohibit permanent abstinence, and premature old age is the penalty of youthful excesses. Nevertheless, in the natural order of the universe, good certainly predominates; and, notwithstanding the instability of the world, plainly points out our artificial state the moment we rise above some certain medium whatever that may be assigned by nature, we are continually warned against violating her decrees.

Were evil paramount, chaos would have returned long ago.

The wider the scope embraced by our observations, the stronger conviction will ensue of the equalization of mankind, either by compensations, by proving the unimportance of what is precious in the eyes of the injudicious, or by showing that adversity levels all things. Let us no longer be deluded with the smiling countenance having banished care, and let us cease to call the lowly miserable.

If felicity consist in virtuous energies, we must be qualified by our condition for their exercise; nor is its definition by the Grecian sage, as "the enjoyment of a healthful body, an ample fortune, and a mind not without accomplishments," to be held as inexpressive.* Yet with all these properties, unless content and the desire of well-doing be concomitant, there can be no felicity. But in truth, the definition of felicity, as well as the direct medium of its attainment, is most abstruse and difficult, the pursuits and the enjoyments of mankind are so different. Many are satisfied with the lowest fortune, and the most trivial occupations. No pleasure is reaped reciprocally by individuals from what affords to each the highest relish: some never look beyond the present hour; others contemplate felicity as the reward of great actions,

* *Diogenes Laertius in vita Thaletis.*

and disposed in distant prospects. Long prosperity is to be balanced by short and irretrievable disgrace; and although life has been calamitous, it may be closed in the arms of our kindred, or by a glorious death preserving the honour of the departed in the remembrance of his countrymen. So is the account to be rated of human affairs. But were the choice committed to weak mortals, perhaps they ought not to await adversity ere they wish to quit the world. "Die, Diagoras, die, since thou canst not be a god!" cried one to the father of the victors in the Olympic games; and, as if he could be reserved for no felicity more exquisite, he expired amidst the tumult of his joy.* Thus we must refuse to compute the ratio of good or evil by their respective compensations before the dying day; when prosperity and reverses have terminated; when it shall be seen whether "he is to be deemed happy who is ushered prosperously into life, and expires in tranquillity."†

It may have been already gathered from reiterated observations, that felicity has the best prospect of permanence when resting least on extrinsic objects, for their possession is so uncertain, and their duration the most fleeting. But as the affairs of the world could not advance without the wishes

* *Aulus Gellius*, lib. iii. cap. 15.—*Cicero Tusc. Quest.* lib. i. § 46.

† *Valerius Maximus*, lib. ix. cap. 12: *De mortibus non vulgaribus*.

and desires of mankind being deeply incorporated with them, so does this become the means of humiliation to the proudest and most confident in the tenure of their prosperity. Those familiar with adversity, cannot be greatly affected by a deterioration of their circumstances : those who have strength of mind to bear high prosperity with equanimity, perhaps will not sink very low in its failure, as they have laid in some preparation for the accidents of life. Prosecuting virtuous energies, therefore, and submitting with perfect resignation to the will of Providence, will go far to ensure the happiness of man.*

Felicity, doubtless, lies partly within our own controul, spite of our exposure to evil. If concentrating our concerns limit our cares, surely it depends on ourselves whether we shall adventure into such situations as may be productive of uneasiness. Likewise, if too deep impressions of worldly casualties impair our peace, we disturb ourselves by voluntarily yielding to them when they are avoidable. Precipitately identifying our interests with every surrounding object, lays us the most open to agitations ; and a morbid sensibility of temper is the readiest to be wounded. Therefore, those who can bring themselves to meet sublunary occurrences with absolute indifference, though participating in the fewest ardent enjoyments, perhaps are protected

* *Reid on the Active Powers*, Essay iii. chap. 4.

from the greatest infringements of their tranquillity. The philosophic contemplator of the universe seems to have a surer hold of felicity than if procuring gratification from the pleasures of sense, from mixing with the multitude, and embarking in the controversies of mankind.

But peace, uninterrupted, ought neither to be the expectation, nor can it be the lot of mortals: and if they actually have some influence on their own felicity, let them beware of arrogating any real controul of destiny, lest they be undeceived by ruin. As the mind roams continually over new projects, it never can be told what is the ultimatum of our desires, or what are the boons with which we shall rest satisfied. Yet, present content is the harbinger of happiness; and we shall generally fail in attaining any thing truly better than that which is already at command. All we want is the relish for its sweets. Does it follow that, however eager to abandon our humble lot, pleasure and security shall be found in a higher fortune? Does it follow, that tranquillity must accompany every important change of station, and that we shall be then happier than we have been? On the contrary, we should rather conclude it to be so far otherwise, that certain comforts must be conceded in endeavouring to reconcile ourselves to that very condition which we were so earnest to obtain.

Thus the absolute disparity which superficial observers so hardily hasten to decide as the lot of

mankind, is more imaginary than real. Compensations frequently dispensed to the afflicted, elevate them to a level with the prosperous, while the visitation of calamity on the great and the successful, reduces them to the common standard. There are many exceptions, indeed, at least we think them so, from human liability to suffer, and from beholding the commencement and the close of a happy or a miserable life. But for the most part, those who repine at their own fate, are wont to overlook the lower fortunes assigned to the majority of their race; and in their cooler and more deliberate reflections, they will very seldom find themselves ready to exchange their condition for that which has been envied in another.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE PROFITABLE OCCUPATION OF TIME.

EVERY succeeding year seems but half the length of that preceding it, as if time were abbreviated by the simple duration of human existence. The shortest instant cannot be arrested in its transit: it comes, it flies, and in its flight it perishes for ever in the dark gulf of eternity. Before enumerating the fugacious hours of youth, we have already grown old: our pleasures live only in remembrance.

But we are involved in ambiguity while endeavouring to recall the earlier incidents of life: few are ascribed to their own peculiar period, or receive their own proper character: the gay and serious, the mean and important, the pleasing and painful, are all rudely blended together. Antiquity is fresh in memory, yet subsequent intervals have treacherously slipped into oblivion. Let us enquire how we have been occupied.

But is it not better previously to lay down a plan which shall contribute to human profit, which shall teach the due employment of that time we are permitted to remain below, which shall fit us

for the measure of life allotted, according to the country we inhabit, or the people among whom we dwell, which shall be the source of pleasure as it passes, and grateful when brought back in recollection?

Were not the necessities of man aroused, he would slumber the larger portion of time in indolence. Before providing for his wants, they would press upon him; for the easier they are supplied, they give him the less anxiety. Where the earth in genial climes spontaneously yields her exuberant produce, he has only to cull the flower or pluck the fruit; but bleak and barren regions shew, that he is not sent into the world to sleep; that while screening himself from the blast, his industry must seek its harvest in the soil, and prudence forewarns him to anticipate the winter in preparation of its stores.

Plenty, together with comfort, are brought by successive stages of improvement in the condition of man. But his necessities in food, repose, and shelter, arising from animal sensations, must be relieved preparatory to mental enjoyments. The feelings refined in tranquillity, then, unfold an immeasurable scope for intellectual cultivation; and the mind, becoming the source of action, finds that the objects of its contemplation form the beacon of human felicity in the suitable occupation of time.

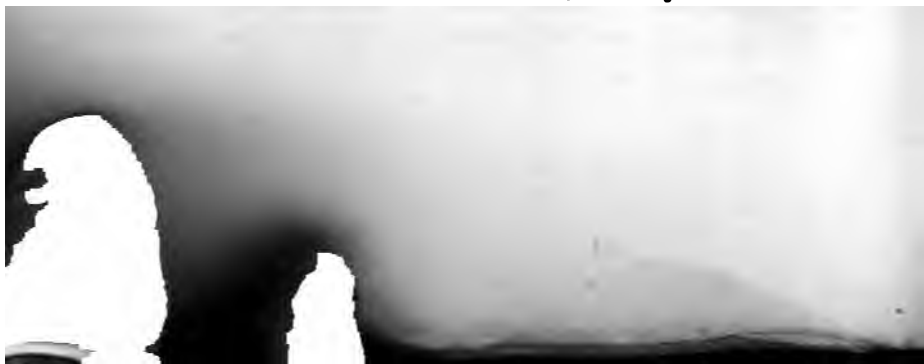
When once the spring is bent, either speculative or practical pursuits must keep its tension. Painful vacuities follow as it is relaxed: Yet, true to

the original nature of man, the apathy of many is such, that bare existence seems a sufficient pleasure. Basking in the noontide sunshine, reclining on downy couches, their farthest prospect is passing the drowsy day in listless languor : evening comes un welcomed, and the rising dawn is met as free of regret as of satisfaction. To others the synonym of misery is time : dreaded as the presence of a foe, its progress is anxiously watched, and schemes contrived to shut it out from observation ; nor is that the least joyful moment when real slumbers relieve their vigils. There are still some besides, who, ardently occupied with the present, think nothing of the past, never of the future, and by whom the lapse of time is unnoticed.

Let it be confessed, that our care is more about consuming time than improving it : that the matters of each succeeding day seldom afford utility or interest, or leave a deep impression for retrospect on their evanescence.

After the personal wants of mankind are supplied, surely their earliest duty will consist in offering pious ejaculations of gratitude to that munificent Being which they believe has made an ample provision for their use, and has given them the means of reaping it. Next, it becomes "the great business of man to improve his mind and govern his manners."*

* *Antoninus Meditationes*, lib. xii. § 33.



Yet we have not an unlimited choice of the course we shall follow. Independently of being continually withdrawn by the urgency of necessity from what is the bent of inclination, each must accommodate himself to the situation that he is obliged to occupy, and he is fettered by circumstances which cannot be infringed. The earth is a great theatre, where he may play the part assigned to him: a vast range is open: diversities of pursuit are actuating the whole legions of mortals. We may profit of all before us, providing we shall not trench on the privilege of others to do the same: our duty is to make our performance the best which may be within the compass of our abilities.*

If man be born for civilization, he is not designed for solitude; because it is chiefly in society that his virtues can be an enjoyment to himself, and benefit his fellows. But those endowed with a refined imagination, with mental energy, with vigorous intellect and experience, will find incredible charms and utility in temporary retirement from occupation.

How delightful is it to contemplate a rural life after the throng of a populous city; to exchange the tumultuous throes of the multitude for the

* *Epicletus* Enchiridion, cap. 23: "Remember that your part in the play depends on the will of the poet. All your office is to do the best you can." *Reid*, *Active Powers of Man*, Essay v. ch. 5.

placid murmur of the stream, and the bleating of the flocks in the valley; to watch the gilding of the mountains, and breathe the freshness of the fading twilight, instead of the polluted atmosphere of boisterous midnight revels!

Such are enjoyments to those who, incorporated with the unwieldy mass of mankind, have been tossed by the stormy vacillations of the world; who have been forced to forswear their pleasures in the study of nature, and gladly hasten to seize it at intervals of ease.

The mind ripens in solitude: it is there that all our grand projects are conceived and digested; where our thoughts are weighed, and experience is confirmed by reflection. We can debate with ourselves what ought to be. The memory revives its images, which, purified by the understanding, leads the way to truth.* It is the summing up of evidence, where we are taught how little is conveyed by simple observation.

But all the charms of retirement are exceeded by the allurements of monastic life, promising peace to those who have dwelt amidst disturbance; where, spite of the deperdition of fortune, and the transience of time, the soul may be pacified in the offices of devotion or benevolence, until it shall be summoned to follow the objects of its affection, or the friends of youth.

* *Malebranche Recherche de la Verite*, liv. i. chap. 2. § 5.

But man is a social being. Though solitude may please for a time, though it may refine, improve, or embellish the mind, he must return to the world to display the fruit of his conceptions, and impart the profits he has received. He has gone to a temporary retreat, from which to be speedily recalled to the scenes of action, if benefit shall come of it.

Retirement is excellent where we are ready to return with our sensations and sentiments unimpaired. But solitude gives birth to many peculiarities alike affecting the mind and the manners. Those who pass their lives without associates become too much the subject of their own considerations. They are ever prone to adopt the best construction in enquiries regarding themselves, and they issue forth from retirement replete with egotism or ignorance.

It requires a vigorous mind to continue occupied with itself after ceasing to be occupied with men. Fatigued with the bustle of the world, and sick of a busy life, many sigh for privacy and an end of their labours. After long anticipation, the happy moment comes at last, and they bid adieu to care. The novelty amuses. For human intercourse, they have the diversity of things: from the life of society, they go to the stillness of solitude. No want of leisure now oppresses them; they breathe in freedom; they ought to rejoice. But is it so? Commonly such retirement brings fewer flowers than thorns. Those who sought it did not know that

"in general mankind can be happy only by action of one kind or another, and that the exercise of the intellectual powers is one source of delight from the cradle to the grave."* They did not know that the best man in action is no longer the best in idleness; that "he that is used to go forward and findeth a stop, falleth out of his own favour, and is not the thing that he was."† Their previous felicity, though they had never discovered why they were happy, arose from action. Their mind not being sufficiently energetic for speculation, nor endowed with inventive imagination to devise pursuits corresponding with the change of condition, they grow discontented, cheerless, and melancholy, and perhaps at length languish for a renewal of that very exertion from which they had fled.

Now is occupation discovered to be the principal ingredient of felicity: the real fountain of almost all the ultimate tranquillity we can enjoy: that personal labour preserves the health, while the intellect is enlarged by mental exercise. We no longer ask why are many of the poor so contented, nay so happy, amidst their privations, for we see that it is from occupation: nor why the rich are so vacant, so languid, so dissatisfied, or so miserable, but because they have none. Truly, if a stranger could penetrate the interior, he

* *Hutcheson*, Moral Philosophy, B. i. ch. 1. § 4.

† *Bacon*, *Essays*, § 19.

would often prefer being one of the humblest domestics of a palace instead of envying its owner.

Thus must the energetic be more weary in their inaction than they would be of excessive labour.

But it does not seem enough that merely the passing moment shall be agreeably employed. Occupation should be not only profitable in itself, but lead to ulterior profitable consequences, if designed to bring permanent enjoyment.

Were we bound, however, to speak of what is to be deemed most important, a review of the whole œconomy of human life would be essential, and still our decision would be embarrassed by controversies: for one or another would call his own pursuit the best. Evidently, half the human race must be always engaged by industry, in providing for their individual subsistence, and in advancing the comfort of the remainder. The various fashions whereby they are trained to do so, are not for discussion here: all conduct to uniformity and confirmed habits, unless an inborn genius shall break through their confines, and chalk out a different course.

But mankind are content as much with the insignificance as the grandeur of pursuits; and patiently follow a beaten track, rather than diverge from it to seek another. Idleness is distressing: they fly from its pains as anxiously as those who dread the consciousness of time; and occupation imparts such a craving for renewal to some, that they gladly descend to the humblest vocations, from

which their contracted ideas never can emerge. Nothing is known to them without the narrowest circle of their own formation, and of which they are themselves the center. How rarely do the faculties of the pedagogue expand farther than the exigencies of his pupil demand! How rarely does sublime invention distinguish the practical mechanic! Both are at the end what they were at the beginning of life; but both may be amply satisfied with their lot. The cottager who digs his little garden, and reaps its produce for the benefit of his family, finds himself happy in renewing industry.

Constant occupation in insignificant employments, if not degrading the mind, at least restrains its aspiring energies. A traveller visiting Palestine in the year 1807, found a pious monk, who never had quitted the walls of the church of the Holy Sepulchre, but occupied in trimming 200 lamps, and cleansing the sanctified places, he allowed himself only four hours of nightly repose.* The weak are propense to trifles: and although humble occupations may be interesting, the mind enlarges as the subjects engaging it are great.

Time, said the celebrated Lavater, is the greatest of human treasures; to respect it is our duty, and its waste is immoral:† Fortius held, that not a single moment should pass without profit.‡ Yet labour demands repose: all our appetites must be

* *Chateaubriand, Voyages*, tom. ii. p. 10.

† *Williams, Tour in Switzerland*, vol. i. p. 68, 69.

‡ *Fortius de Ratione Studii*, cap. 28.

moderate: we cannot feast for ever: nor ought we therefore to be too parsimonious of time.

The principal business of human life being to improve the mind, and to govern the manners, excites some partial consideration on the means of promoting useful energies.

Man, in his progress, is a huntsman, a shepherd, an agriculturist, and a merchant; but yet another stage of advancement far beyond these is found relating to intellectual culture, as conducive to temporary convenience, as well as permanent felicity.

The courses of literature detailed by skilful authors, education in the arts, together with some experience, admit of the following general observations.

All our information is derived from three grand sources—experience, conversation, and study; which, to produce their real and beneficial influence, must be ripened by reflection. Any acquisitions for the government of life alone, from experience or observation, though the best, are insignificant compared with the larger mass of precept or growing knowledge. The smallest portion of incident falls to the lot of one amidst millions: a few prominent features only, characterize his whole existence. But, notwithstanding celebrated names are rare, a single discovery, a fortunate occurrence, a remarkable fate, has transmitted renown to posterity.

Confined to trivial remarks or passing anecdotes of the day, conversation is seldom directed to those

important subjects which shall augment our fund of learning.* Thence is the chief source of instruction to come from those select compositions, offered as so many monuments of the genius, the industry, and the erudition of illustrious minds—and here is a theme for perpetual converse.

From stimulating our perceptions, and improving the reasoning faculties, serious and solid investigation doubtless is the most profitable: not forgetting, however, that the mind having to be polished as well as enlarged, no mean portion of social pleasure reposes on the suavity of the manners.

But as no special course of life is entirely of our own selection, neither have we absolutely the choice of our studies. Like the traveller passing through a strange country, where objects corresponding to his taste share his greatest attention, so are we individually attracted by certain subjects only, while all others are indifferent, or perhaps disgusting. An intimate correspondence between the mental and personal energies, is instrumental in this distinction. As some men are ardent in enquiry, thirst for knowledge, and are patient of labour; there are others whose enervated mind retains them in indolence, or plunges them in the pursuit of pleasure. Taste, however, is undoubtedly to be modified and im-

* *Morhof* Polyhistor, lib. i. cap. 15. de *Conversazione Erudita*, considers that great advantages may be derived from colloquial and epistolary intercourse, into which he divides the subject.

proved. If the mind be devoted only to seek diversion without profit in pastime, perhaps it may be recalled to vigour by the judicious selection of interesting subjects put before it. Entertainment may be conjoined with instruction, as truth may be sometimes conveyed in allegory: But it is unfortunate where there is such a relaxation from discipline, that nothing will serve except amusement, taking for the task what should be only the recreation.

Ought not we to esteem time precious, and to spend it profitably, on reflecting that every hour, in respect to us, has perfected its course, and when past has perished; that millions of ages never will bring it back; that days, months, and years, are sunk in the great abyss beyond redemption?

As the end of all study is to enlarge and refine the intellect, the subjects of investigation are qualified by different rates of importance: whence an enquiry into the nature of man, his duties, and relations, seems to constitute the most essential topic under the name of *moral science*.

Objects nearly the same in their intrinsic character are presented every where: nearly the same principles are entertained by those who have reached the basis of truth. Axioms in religion, in politics, and morals, are irresistible to the intelligent; but the modes adopted to communicate or enforce them are widely different: and hence a false view of the means to be employed has often proved in-

jurious, where the design was actually for the prosperity of mankind.

The principles of moral science leading us to investigate the nature of man, shew how he is affected by art: where his strength and his weakness reside, and how the suitable culture of the heart shall be followed. They teach an enquiry into the seeds and the development of those great virtues, elevating mortals high in the scale of the creation; while at the same time exposing how the seductions of passion and proclivity towards vice, may approximate them to the brutishness of creatures influenced by their sensual appetites only. We penetrate the real purpose of existence in the wonderful intellectual powers we enjoy: we discover what are the true elements of the social bond, and the just sources of human pleasure: that the good and the evil of the world are dependent mainly on the discipline which is to be held over ourselves, and that from thence are to come the unerring guides to a happy life.

Not altogether unconnected with moral science, more extensive in its range, and next in importance, is *physical science*, or an enquiry after the constitution of the universe. How far do human conceptions sink below the grandeur of the creation, in the littleness of their own most laboured works! How admirable are the structure, the beauty, and infinity of the parts, from which the harmonies of nature are combined! In soaring throughout the ethereal regions, in penetrating the recesses of

the earth, and plunging amidst the depths of the ocean, unknown worlds are discovered, which absorbing the mind in wonder, exalts it far beyond its narrow tenement below. Behold the bright luminaries of the firmament, and the meteor flashing in the skies ! Behold the huge inorganic masses traversing the trackless atmosphere with nameless rapidity, yet undisturbed, and as if respecting each other's course ! Behold the swelling embryo, void of resemblance to the parent, in size, in figure, or the number and distribution of its parts, yet become the theatre of volition, from having received the breath of life ! But how is animation imparted, how does nutriment feed the frame, why are its dimensions bounded, in what do corporeal maladies or mental alienation consist ? Where is the failure that brings existence to a close ?—We discover the means of decomposing products, and combining them in new arrangements, for the purpose of embellishing the arts. We plan, we measure, we weigh, and proportion from the elements of science presented by nature.

Thus it depends on our knowledge of the properties of matter, though its refinement often eludes controul, that human safety, convenience, and comfort, are procured.

The physical sciences therefore seem more adapted than all other learning for expanding the mind, yet of inferior utility to moral science, perhaps, in regulating the œconomy of human life. They de-

mand more patient and diligent habits of enquiry, a greater share of invention and perseverance, and singular dexterity sometimes, in ascertaining the truth of the propositions which serve for their illustration. Wanting the benefit of physical science, we should be ignorant of the arts; and wanting the arts, we might relapse into the pristine state of man, from which all the profits of moral science would be unable to redeem us.

Obvious arrangements can be formed of physics, but systems of moral science are more arbitrary. Genius and research, indeed, will discover the reciprocal relation of things, and shew them in their proper place: and hence may be deduced the vast advantage of classifying our thoughts and observations, that is, of the materials for prosecuting study. While they continue vague and indistinct, so must our conclusions remain alike unsettled. But when concentrated, collected, and arranged, all the subject, and all its parts, are at once displayed to view. It is difficult, indeed, for want of knowledge, to lay down a regular plan of study, and patiently conduct it to a termination; though having been adopted as the best security against vacillating opinion, it should not be easily infringed in the futile hope of acquiring suddenly what demands excessive leisure.

The art which, in moral practice, teaches us to think justly and to live well, was preferred by the ancients to some of those branches of physical science in greatest repute among the moderns.

Quitting these profound researches in systems explanatory of the universe, or theories for human government, we are attracted by other studies, and more peculiarly the composition or perusal of written discourses as the occupation of time. Precluded from personal observation, we are compelled to trust to the fidelity of others for the greater portion of our knowledge ; but, too often, reading is " no other than an idle amusement," nor of much superior use to other amusements serving merely for pastime.*

The celebrated Bacon has divided human knowledge into only three branches, as obtained from reason, memory, and imagination ; others distinguish it more indefinitely, as consisting of science and literature ; and some partition all written works into those of truth and fiction, not an inexpedient guide in reference to utility. But let us restrict our considerations chiefly to works flowing from reason, and founded on memory, as the means of improving the mind ; for those of imagination, though imparting pleasure and the useful vehicles of allegory, seem of inferior importance.

As physical and moral science are acquired from reason, history is established on memory. But its scope is very wide, from embracing past along with current incidents, from comprehending the state of countries, civil and religious, foreign and domestic affairs, the memoirs of individuals and of nations.

* *Muralt, Letters*, p. 227. Louvois, the minister of Louis XIV. is alleged never to have read any book.

History exhibits a long development of the work of time ; it is the record of antiquity for the benefit of posterity. It shews the nature of various regions, together with the disposition of their inhabitants; the progress of society, the invention of laws, internal resources, extension of commerce, the rise of nations, and their fall. From history we are enabled to deduce what was the best form of government as adapted to the circumstances of the people, and the most permanent system of faith ; why certain states have flourished more than others, or went sooner to decay ; whether piety put down superstition, and if patriotism discouraged selfishness. We discover whether the permanence of uniform rule results from dread or affection for the governor ; and why revolutions, even in necessity, are so dangerous, instead of bringing security along with them.

Yet we are deprived of that satisfaction from the study of history, yielded by physical science, in wanting the test of experiment ; for nothing in its context is comparable to mathematical demonstration. If accurate observation, respect for truth, and energy have shone, weakness, credulity, partiality, and falsehood, have been common to every age : Nor can the passing æra plead exemption from any, or from all these imperfections. But as the skilful chemist, by his art, can purify the rude mass of chaotic matter ; so can deep research, and the knowledge of human nature, corrected by discrimination, enable us to unfold the roll of faithful history.

But history ought not to leave the more essential range of worldly transactions, for the sake of degenerating into mere biography: an excellent department of literature, indeed, when well conducted, as affording the most interesting models for instruction and example. Biography may be called the record of the human race, while history is the register of time: It is the principal feature of every æra, the picture of national glory, the narrative of virtue or vice, the means of preserving fame for admiration, or of rendering iniquity odious. Impartiality, brevity, and veracity, are alike the mines from which it has to be drawn in genuine ore.

Nevertheless, biography is often to be ranked among the most faithless kinds of history, and that from many causes. It is equally ready, as an instrument, for adulation of the living, as of censure of the dead: it is the gift of servility, the bribe of avarice, the road to favour, and it is a temptation to insincerity, as much in exaggeration as in defect. The part of biography is to represent the individual exactly in a just light, to assign him his due position in the theatre of affairs, whether it be good or otherwise, and to deal out subordinate portions in actual subordination. But this is the medium whereby men of little mind may clothe the mean with embellishment, to render their aspect imposing, and parade the lowest incidents with an air of consequence. Like the hero of romance, he must then participate in every thing around him; and to render his name the more notorious, he must be incor-

porated, as it were, with the whole world, of which he forms the most insignificant atom. Perhaps the greatest vitiations of history have thence originated. Cogent reasons might be assigned for one composing memoirs of himself, the more difficult from the bias of partiality, but certainly the better means of explaining pursuits and motives. Many, however, seem very earnest to undertake the task; and thirty years ago it was justly observed, that "hardly a person of any note in society, or an author little above mediocrity, can depart this life, or a criminal of some notoriety be executed, but he has instantly more than one biographer who wishes to edify the survivors."*

If study be designed to improve the mind, this is an object which can be effectually attained only from works of truth. Perusal of the finest flow of fiction, grants but a transient pleasure; sometimes superior to what the former impart, because it can be framed at will, yet rarely leaving impressions as profitable. The incidents of truth, though less agreeably disposed, and more faintly coloured, perhaps are the radical sources of the greatest share of fiction.

Poetry is not necessarily fiction, but it is very seldom truth; and even where advanced as such, who can question that many a fact has fallen from its place, or partly given way to the structure of rhyme? Equal liberty is practised on language and incident.

* *Wendeborn, View of England, vol. ii. p. 87.*



The most attractive works of the imagination have been poetical. The elegance of sentiment, the variety of ideas, the harmony of diction, the ingenuity of the narrative, and the facility of conveying maxims, have all conspired to give them an unusual charm to every nation susceptible of feeling. The ruder tribes have versification in chaunts and simple melodies: the wandering Arabs of the desert have native poets among them, who can avail themselves of a language fertile in synonymes, and render metaphor the vehicle of instruction: And the barbarous inhabitants of the North, like those of the South, were wont, in this manner, to preserve mythologies from their priests or warriors.

Poetical excellence is the richest display of intellectual flourish.

But that unfettered fancy which, wildly roving beyond the bounds of reason to lose itself in regions of ideal space, from whence consistency must be infringed in its return, merits no name of genius, though adorned by words. As little can delicacy flow through the polluted channel of vulgar sentiment or coarse expression. Animated feelings, natural description, elegant imagery, must accompany the wide excursions of the mind in eloquent and harmonious verse, to be brought back and gracefully concentrated by a well-regulated imagination.

But the want of originality is remarkable; nor is genius often distinguished by the choice of interesting matter, and the powers of language. Even

where they are combined, their union seems so short and fleeting, that, to keep them together, their owner is compelled to quit his subject, and seek relief in episode.*

If vulgar topics, faulty versification, and homely phraseology, have been more specially current of later years, it must be ascribed to that aberration of taste which in modern times has so deeply wounded the soundest rules of criticism. Apologies are offered for it, indeed, in recalling human imperfections. But great inequalities shew defective talent in proving that the author has aimed at something beyond his capacity. No artist would merit praise for depicting the human figure if any of its members were out of all proportion ; nor could he advance pretensions to taste, were the subject gross, even with the colouring exquisite.

It is singular that the ancients illustrate their opinions less by reference to their great philosophers, than from the writings of the poets: Among the moderns, those, with few exceptions, the most familiar with the poets, seem the least acquainted with the philosophers.

After perusing a literary composition, let us interrogate ourselves regarding the nature and fruits of our occupation. Have we had only an agreeable pastime, of which the pleasure already decays,

* *Burke* on the Sublime and Beautiful, Part i. § 19, says, poets are "rather imitators of one another than of nature."

or has it enlarged our knowledge, and improved our taste? Time is not mis-spent in gaining information : but passing pleasures, too often renewed, serve to enervate the mind, reducing it at length to that condition from which some strong excitement is necessary to arouse its energies.

So great a proportion, especially of modern literature, being offered in works of fiction, we should examine into what ought to constitute some points of merit, and what are some of the imperfections which it is essential to avoid.

The same primary qualities appropriate to poetry must enter their structure, selecting a theme of interest, embellished by that imagination which is regulated by tasteful discussion in eloquent language. Those images should be represented of which the reality would be approved as worthy of representation, and as consistent with nature : they must be agreeable to the mind, as they would be grateful to the senses. Though all the variety whence entertainment can be derived originates in the fertility of imagination, still, as the most luxuriant fancy, like nocturnal visions, would diverge the farthest from consistency, so must imagination be checked by judgment, and refined by taste.

Literature, which is a testimony of the highest intellectual ornament, and the means of advancing all the perfections of the mind, becomes debased in descending through a train of grovelling ideas to

dwell on trivial or vulgar topics. Incidents sufficiently interesting surely can be found on taking a higher flight: we can expatiate on the beauties without selecting the deformities of nature. We have ingenious sentiment, brilliant imagination, and elegant language to adorn our subject, which, if not to be merely imitated, at least should be respected.

Words are called the pledges of our thoughts: and to speak well is our earliest and most anxious tuition,—a quality alike essential when transferred to writing: therefore, purity and harmony must unite in compositions which are to engage the mind. How can the delicacy of sentiment be enjoyed without the delicacy of style? The finest conceptions are lost and disfigured in the rusticity of words.

But it is the vulgar that corrupt taste, and those barbarians of civilized society who address them as they would address themselves. We plead in favour of nature; but is it nature which is thus taken for a guide, is it not rather inability to distinguish nature from an awkward admixture of art? Rusticity may be sometimes excellent as an interlude, just as occasional eccentricity may heighten dramatic representation. It is amusing as an approach to originality.* But as mental refinement consists in delicate reflections delicately expressed,

* *La Bruyere*, tom. i. p. 127. "A peasant, or a drunk man, may fill up some scenes of a farce. In genuine comedy this is scarcely admissible. How could it afford the ground-work or principal action of the drama?"

rusticity is neither to be the chief ingredient of any writing, nor of any converse; nor ought we to commit so gross an error in regard to our own feelings, and especially to the rising generation, with whom frequency easily becomes habit, as to familiarize them with compositions devoid of eloquence. It is very true, that "images which are low or coarse may illustrate a subject with great exactness or force. To mere reason, therefore, they would appear unexceptionable; but the least delicacy of taste must be disgusted with them, and prevent their admission."* Many scenes and subjects of nature are quite unfit or unworthy for delineation, though they could be done to the life, and taken for identity itself. Mean ideas are never to be excited by corresponding figures:† and if the satisfaction derived from literature be either from surprise or sympathy, the enjoyment of rustic images and vulgar speech is the pleasure of an uninformed or a grovelling mind.

Real and intrinsic genius never will allow itself to be thus circumscribed, or take its laws from the vulgar, instead of dictating those to be obeyed: Nor, like some of superficial talent, will it descend to "unusual epithets, conceited enigmas, and other affected eccentricities of language."‡ Delicacy never can associate with the gross and the vile. Who

* *Gerard*, Essay on Genius, p. 400.

† *Dr Blair*, Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, recalls this counsel of Cicero, Lect. xv.

‡ *Barclay*, Enquiry concerning Life and Organization, p. 295, 296.

of dignified feelings will enter on sports unbecoming his condition, or invite the vulgar approbation in his exercises? The diamond takes the highest polish, the eagle soars to the sun. Let us call literature intellectual embellishment, the fruits of study, or design it recreation, the illustrious mind will be occupied in congenial subjects as worthy of itself, and give the law instead of receiving it.

But literature is the ultimate profit of education. If we intend to instruct the ignorant, or to improve ourselves, the subject, and our language, must be superior to the present capacity of each. All the struggles and exertions of mankind are to emancipate themselves from rusticity, nor do those who leave it ever desire to return.

The multitude know what gives them pleasure, and this they esteem : but they have a very imperfect conception of real qualities, because while the lowest virtues gain their praise, "of the highest virtues they have no sense or perceiving at all."* So are the multitude the last whose taste is to be consulted, or whose opinions are to be taken on literature : And we learn that of old, when a decision on qualities was obtained by the majority holding up their hands, this appeal corrupted the taste of the poets, who had then to frame their compositions "according to the depraved taste of vulgar judges."†

* *Bacon, Essays*, § 53.

† *Plato de Legibus*, lib. ii.

The faults of language, indeed, are often the faults of the times. Expressions now current would cover the delicate with blushes, were not their original purport lost ; and others are forcing their way, which no selection can approve. The vigorous and manly style of the former century certainly should be ascribed to the better acquaintance then prevailing with the Greek and Roman classics ; and its modern deterioration partly to the indiscriminate revival of ancient English literature.*

Although the preceding remarks be applicable to written works in general, the benefit derived from the products of knowledge will abate our expectations of perfection. If denying any real utility to those of fiction, still while the offspring of genius, refined by taste and clothed in eloquence, we shall find their perusal an agreeable pastime, and contributing to the formation of an elegant style.

But let us anxiously restrain the pernicious innovations with which degraded taste is menacing the eradication of genuine literature ; and awaken to the absurdity of mistaking extravagance for imagination, novelty for genius, and, worst of all, vulgarity for original nature. Shall we patiently witness the incalculable mischief that would result from the overthrow of those venerable edifices of

* *Lloyd, Memoirs*, p. 689, affords a singular specimen of involved composition, comprehending a whole biography in a few lines.

learning, reared as the monuments of human zeal and industry, and allow the rising generation to grow old in vitiated feelings? The gradual advancement of human intellect, through progressive ages, is not to come to such a speedy termination in abandoning all it has acquired: Nor, surely, has it attained that summit of maturity, which shall lead it already to wither and decay. Let us conquer prejudice, instead of permitting prejudice to conquer us. Though time of itself would betray the error, from the inconveniences generated in the subversion of sound sense and discrimination, we should have to retrace the road that had been so precipitately forsaken, if desiring to recover the excellence we had lost.

What is it that now seems the criterion of literary perfection, in the estimation of the public? Is it elegant poetry, the beauties of the creation, or the sublimity of nature? Is it the investigation of science, impartial biography, interesting memoirs, the œconomy of human life, the history of nations, or any result of profound erudition? As if a tacit reproach on the grand intellectual products which embellish time, we forget to enquire after them any longer,—and it seems as if the retrogression of the mind were willing to concentrate all the capacities of literature in the delineation of fictitious character.

How much would the illustrious authors of former ages be astonished, could they return to behold the

despicable subjects which the tasteless have crowned with approbation ! How much would they be chagrined to know the works which have threatened to supplant their own ! Either the best informed have laboured under remarkable delusion, or a singular perversion of sentiment has ensued in the present generation, if we rate as of exclusive quality those very writings which they affirm ought not to be tolerated. Where does the error lie ? Is it in us, or was it in them ?

Above a century ago, a judicious author justly observes of romances, that they insult history "no less than common sense :"* And, with equal justice, the learned Professor Meiners, in treating of suitable studies, speaks thus at the present day : "If I may be allowed to give my opinion of the not inconsiderable number of the common run of novels which I have taken the trouble to look at, when strongly recommended for perusal, they either offend against geography and history or the daily experience of men and things ; or so grossly violate all laws of probability, that persons who make these writings their ordinary amusement, must fill their heads with false notions, and half true or mutilated facts, and be rendered almost wholly unfit for the accurate observation of mankind, and of human affairs. The most extensively mischievous effects produced by predilection for novels is doubtless,

* *Reflections on our Common Failings*, p. 184.

that those who accustom themselves to this kind of reading cannot at length dispense with it, and either conceive an indifference or an aversion to all other good books."*

If many others, the most intelligent, coincide in these sentiments, we may ask what testimony of learning is conveyed by such compositions? Whether they are suitable exercises for the masculine energies of an elevated mind? or, whether they would be unfitly classed with the ever versatile mass of unprofitable frivolities?—At least, beholding them with unbiassed eyes, a lower place in the scale of literature must be allotted to them than some of their partial admirers will be ready to allow.

Perhaps we are entitled to conclude, that the aggregate of human information should have now become more extensive, from the numbers employed in literary occupation. But this has been opposed by several impediments, among which are the rarity of real genius, and an aversion to undergo that labour whereby a conquest is to be made of knowledge. Originality is restricted to the narrowest compass; for the valuable discoveries, inventions, or compositions of individuals, who have not availed themselves of the information of their precursors, are brief and few. But this is not all. The progress of knowledge is alike obstructed by the want of present observation, and the ignorance of past ex-

* *Meiners, History of the Female Sex, vol. iv. p. 302.*

perience ; by so blind an admiration of the ancients, as to condemn the works of the moderns ; and so passionate a desire for novelty, as to disdain the benefit of what has gone before. Our mistaking imitation for originality, our comments on the compositions of others, enquiries into trifling matters, or investigating subjects incapable of solution, though of different operation, also have been injurious to learning : Nor can we exclude extreme credulity or the reverse, together with that impatience of idleness, which prevents the harvest of labour from being duly reaped in reflection.

A lively imagination may exhibit great variety, but little solidity results from it ; and, with every advantage of time and experience, we often fail to ascertain truth, or to think soundly.*

If men would become learned, they must provide an unusual share of patience, industry, and vigour ; for of all acquirements, learning is of the slowest progress, and demanding the longest time. Leisure and deliberation are essential to great undertakings, whence to make ourselves learned of a sudden is impossible. As genius is not evinced by florid effusions, but by a well-regulated imagination, whose luxuriance is delicate in its riches ; neither do skill in languages, the combination of words,

* *Balzac Entretiens*, p. 185. An author of cultivated mind and long experience said, he always rejected his first thoughts ; and choosing only the best from among the good, found them so few that it was difficult to compose extensive works.

declamatory discourse, witty remarks, censorious observations, or a mine of authorities, constitute erudition, so much as the faculty of ascertaining facts, and reasoning justly regarding them. The greater portion of knowledge resolves into axioms, but they are difficult to be found. Some patient labourers have occupied an incredible time in maturing their information; as if feeling the conviction, that "a humble person, who buries himself in his study, who meditates, investigates, or compares, who has read or written all his life, is a learned man."* Archbishop Usher underwent a preparation of 18 years before esteeming himself qualified to treat his subject in writing: and the probation of others has extended to 20, 30, or even 40, in improving their literary treasures. We are ever entitled to doubt the solidity of precocious works; and if compositions be either very rapid or very copious, to question the presence of genius and learning.† Both seem inconsistent with human nature, and as if surpassing human powers.‡

* *La Bruyere*, tom. i. p. 148, in allusion to Mabillon. *Ruinart Abregé de la Vie de Mabillon*, p. 51, describes his diligence as extraordinary. But it is to be regretted that this author is more occupied with the austerities of Mabillon, and his remarkable devotion to St Benedict and St Bernard, than with detailing his most interesting pursuits.

† *Vossius de Imitatione cum Oratoria tum Poetica*, § 3: Valde igitur eos ratio fugit, qui existimant, satis esse multos effudisse versus; atque hanc fertilitatem adpellant ingenii ubertatem.

‡ *Struvius Introductio ad Notitiam Rei Literariæ*, cap. 5. § 5.

It is better to restrict our ultimate literary pursuits to one, or at least to very few subjects, though many channels must be ascended to the fountain: always to ascertain the extent of previous information, to resort to original works, and illustrate our opinions by facts. Men of the most respectable talents frequently shew themselves little acquainted with history, whence they are compelled to argue on hypothesis, or to support on works of fiction and figure what is actually fact. A modern author endeavouring to explain how the passions influence the association of ideas, is under the necessity of resorting to poetry for examples, assuming rather too hardily, that such have as great authority as instances which a person himself observes in ordinary life.* The illustration of fact from admitted fiction, far less the foundation of a new hypothesis, seems very inconsistent where the state of knowledge allows us the actual confirmation of our theories. Dr Beattie appears to rest an argument for the existence of the soul on certain words which Milton has put in the mouth of Adam, and from a passage in one of Dryden's operas.† We are forced indeed to resort to many figures, and to much hypothesis, which sometimes may be employed with sufficient effect; but reasoning from evidence is better than reasoning from presumption.

* *Gerard, Essay on Genius*, p. 149, 150.

† *Beattie, Essay on Truth*, Part I. ch. 2. § 3. p. 77.

The cultivation of pursuits tending to obvious utility, is preferable to those promising none: nor should we ever forget the value of originality; that imitation, if it can be called literature, is contemptible; and that commentary on the compositions of others, for the most part, is unworthy of liberal minds.*

We ought to beware, however, of undervaluing each other's pursuits, especially in ignorance of their ultimate object, or of despising them from too warm partiality for our own. Learning has been extended in consequence of very absurd experiments or investigations, from their producing that which was not the subject of enquiry;† for mankind gain more of their knowledge from practice than theory. Pliny the elder affirms, that he derived some instruction from every work.

If here concluding that the perusal of those of fiction comparatively affords meagre profit, and although inclining to rate the majority very low in the scale of useful literature, there are some the offspring of superior genius, refined by a brilliant imagination, and adorned by a cultivated style. In giving a sensible form to an ideal world, they have not failed of imparting an excellent moral lesson

* *Fortius* de Ratione Studii, cap. 39: *Ingentis est ignavis semper alios velle sequi, semper ducem querere.*

† *Caprices d'Imagination*, p. 333. "If it were as easy to fix mercury as to colour it, its transmutation to gold would be very easy!"

when received as it should be taken : nor can the harmony of human feelings be lost to either the delicacy or grandeur of those splendid writings, which are adapted to sooth or to elevate the soul. Beautiful compositions are ever entitled to praise and admiration :—but they must be beautiful.

Notwithstanding obvious utility should direct our literary investigations, some ingenious men have been so far influenced by their propensities, as to enter on protracted studies from which no ordinary observer can expect any immediate benefit. Thus an elaborate disquisition exists on several hundred species of invisible animals, that is those which our natural eye-sight cannot of itself detect in their proper element.* One volume is devoted to the light shining from men and brutes;† another to the history of the human hair; and a treatise appears on the different fashions of staining it.‡ A considerable work is occupied in attempting to establish that animals are more rational than mankind;§ and a curious tract is written on the consumption of people by spontaneous internal fire.|| A pious divine has left a dissertation on the coat of Jesus Christ without a seam; and the number of the nails of the cross has brought forth a discussion to prove that they must have been

* *Muller*, *Animalcula Infusoria fluviatilia et marina*. † *Bartholinus* de Luce Hominum et Brutorum. ‡ *Junius* de Coma. *Arntzenius* de Colore, et Tinctura Comarum. § *Rorarius* *Animalia Bruta sæpe ratione utantur melius Homine*. || *Laire*

exactly four.* The mere dedication of books has afforded sufficient interest for an essay on the subject;† and an author amuses himself with a discourse to prove that women are not men.‡ Some of these are far from being idle or useless compositions; nor would it be difficult to augment the catalogue of singular literary productions affording equal instruction and entertainment. Controversy has given birth to some extraordinary ebullitions.§ The pronunciation of a word, or the sound of a letter, has kindled disputes to which whole volumes have been consecrated;|| forgetting the excellent rule of Cardan, that nothing inapplicable to the subject, or unworthy to be read, should appear in books.¶ But controversy frequently springs from insufficiency of knowledge, from erroneous data, and believing ourselves acquainted with facts, while having only a probability of their existence. An hundred questions, it is said, might be offered regarding the body or the soul, which, like problems, admit of being impugned or defended:** and absurd discussions arise, which no human learning

Essai sur les Combustions Humains. * *Gerberon L'Histoire de la Robe sans couture de Notre Seigneur.*—*Curtus de Clavis Dominicis.* † *Tackius de Dedicazione Librorum.* ‡ *Disputatio qua Anonymus probare nititur Mulieres Homines non esse.*

§ *Werensfelsius de Logomachiis Eruditorum, var. loc.*

|| *Struvius Introductio, cap. 5. p. 233.*

¶ *Cardan de Vita Propria, cap. 50.*

** *Wright on the Passions, p. 298.*

can hope ever to illustrate. Some, with unparalleled temerity, discourse as freely of the divine perfections as if called on to define sublimity : and the effrontery of others has presumed to treat of heaven and hell with as great familiarity, as if they had visited either, and held daily intercourse with angels.* How many intricate nativities have been calculated from the position of the planets, as if the orbs of the firmament sweeping through immeasurable space were regulating the humble destiny of mortals in their course ! Cardan framed a horoscope, from which he found that all the ethereal bodies had menaced the fortunes attending the hour of his birth : but just at that critical moment, a happy planetary conjunction saved his person from deformity, and he came into the world in human shape.†

Laudable curiosity may be always indulged. Those who have the modesty to think they know little, if endowed with ardour, will not be long of learning more,—a prerogative denied to the confident.

Few situations in which mankind can be placed absolutely preclude improvement ; and “ whoever believes that it is too early to study philosophy, or that the period has passed away, may as well say that the time for a happy life has not yet arrived, or that it remains no longer.”‡ The shortest intervals

* *Reynolds* on the Passions, p. 497.

† *Cardan de Vita Propria*, cap. 2.

‡ *Diogenes Laertius*, lib. x. § 122. in vita Epicuri.

may be profitably employed. When the celebrated Lavoisier was condemned by his own countrymen in the year 1794, he did not complain of the sentence, or solicit pardon ; but he desired a respite for fifteen days, to ascertain the result of an experiment which promised to be important to the human race. It was refused.

Hitherto our attention has been engaged with intellectual acquisitions and mental exercises, which, well-directed, prove inexhaustible sources of interest. But these are far from filling up the measure of time. The preference to be given to others, either of a pure or a mixed description, depends on taste or opinion, perhaps on prejudice also ; recollecting, however, to be cautious of undervaluing pursuits regarding the precise quality of which men find it difficult to agree.*

* A few years ago the munificence of the British government is said to have appropriated two pensions of equal amount to two citizens of the Scottish metropolis ; the one a profound philosopher, whose name was well known in the South,—the other an amateur of heraldry, and the author of some entertaining treatises on that subject. “ What !” said the herald indignantly, on hearing of his fellow-citizen’s good fortune, “ to bestow as great a favour on him as on me : to compare the drawing of lines and circles to one of the most ancient sciences, whose distinctions the highest are proud of, and which many cannot obtain. It is most unjust !”—But no less indignant was the philosopher, that “ the decorator of the pannels of carriages,” as he designed him, “ should be put on a par with one who explored the phenomena of the universe !”

Certainly we do arrogate unreasonable consequences in all things concerning ourselves. But qualities are to be viewed impartially, and their proper place neither too high nor too low assigned to them. Virtue nor vice is to be exaggerated,—nor ought talents; or the want of them, to be unjustly elevated, or the subject of depreciation. We read that an ancient king, Agesilaus, earnestly desired utility to be concomitant on every pursuit; and on that account opposed indulgence in pleasure from enervating the mind. An eminent Greek tragedian, who was universally admired and courted, having met and saluted him, joined his train, in expectation of some compliment. But at length growing impatient, he said, “O king, do not you know me? Have you not heard who I am?” Agesilaus, looking stedfastly on him, replied, “Are not you Callipedes the buffoon!”*

Poetry, music, and painting, of which the analogy is not immediately obvious, are called the sister arts: but the precise importance of each has been differently estimated. The first is commonly held in greater repute than it merits; the second not being reduced to a fixed standard, is rated as it affects the feelings; and the third is for the most part praised the highest, where it is the least useful.

An ancient sage, in classing music and geometry together, inscribes both in the list of amusements.

* *Plutarch Apophthegmata Laconica.*

In earlier ages, Aristotle lays down certain reasons for holding music as an essential branch of education, maintaining that it ought to be cultivated, as well from being desirable in itself, as for the agreeable occupation it affords to leisure hours, and as an elegant embellishment of life.* *Fortius*, though allowing it to be a desirable acquisition, and a grateful refreshment to the exhausted mind, thinks it better to enjoy the music of others, than ourselves to consume the time which is necessary before being able to enjoy our own.† In the opinion of Locke, an eminent modern author, there is a profuse waste of time in attaining only a moderate skill in the art; its cultivators are led into unsuitable society; and he concludes with remarking, that among men of parts and business he has so seldom heard any one commended, or esteemed for having an excellency in music, that of all those things that can come into the list of accomplishments, he thinks he may give it the last place.‡ Locke died in the year 1704.—But is the cultivation of music to be held as a science or an amusement? Melody has always delighted the world: it has always moved the passions: it has been an important accessory in

* *Aristotle Politic.* lib. v. cap. 3. The observations of this author, on melody at least, are nearly the same as those that would occur in the present times, which enhances the obscurity regarding the state of music among the ancients, cap. 5.

† *Fortius de Ratione Studii*, cap. 9.

‡ *Locke on Education, Works*, vol. iii. p. 91.

pacifying those which are disturbed, and in restoring the mind to tranquillity. The ruder stages of society have their melodies like their verses: the pastoral state couples them together: the polished condition endeavours to produce great effects by imposing harmonies. It deals scientifically in sounds. Socrates amused his leisure hours with an instrument, observing, that "one should not be ashamed of learning that of which he is ignorant."^{*} Cicero affirms, that music was esteemed the highest attainment among the Greeks, on which account, Themistocles declining to touch the lyre at a festival, was thought illiterate.[†] The Mityleneans having command of the seas, prohibited the children of the allies who had deserted them, from being instructed in literature and music, as a penalty:[‡] and among the Arcadians, a people of Peloponnesus, unskilfulness in the art was deemed reproachful. Nevertheless, we cannot ascertain in what the music of the ancients consisted; whether it was any thing else than formal recitations in measured cadence. It is not improbable that, if melody originates in the sentimental affections, the melodies of mankind, in similar circumstances, have a decided correspondence. All the language addressed to the feelings must be simple to make a great impression; whence melody ought to be the best in music.

^{*} *Diogenes Laertius*, lib. vi. § 17.—Lib. ii. § 32.

[†] *Cicero*, *Quest. Tusc.* lib. i. § 2.

[‡] *Ælian*, *Varie Historie*, lib. vii. cap. 15.

This is a resource equally delightful in solitude and charming to society. The theory holds a place among the sciences; and its practice, for the one sex at least, has become a regular branch of education, and is accounted an essential accomplishment. But there is so much truth in the words of Locke, that although evil does not necessarily result from the acquirement of music by men, its progress should be guarded, owing to the perils hovering over all relaxations in pleasure. Other allurements, however, probably are conjoined in diverting it from its proper purpose, as it is not known ever to have proved injurious to females.

At first sight it might appear that painting, strictly considered being an imitative art, is not to rank the highest in the scale of celebrity. But the numerous qualifications necessary to constitute a genuine artist, together with its incalculable utility in promoting all the other arts, and every department of science, elevate it to such importance, that we may safely pronounce painting now to be indispensable to the necessities of polished nations. Perhaps we could part entirely with poetry and music, yet suffer little inconvenience: but the loss of the delineative art would be fatal to the permanence of knowledge. The most copious language would be an imperfect substitute.

In estimating comparative utility, we know not whether historical paintings of the first renown, where no one lineament is called a representation

of the truth, should eclipse more humble delineations of interesting subjects from nature, or even in the arts when conducive to human comfort and security. But, in regard to individuals, this is the most essential, and the most convenient of all those acquisitions which we denominate accomplishments: and where sudden reverses having lowered the fortunes of the prosperous, obliged them to practise from necessity what they had acquired for pleasure in the course of an elegant education, drawing, above all, has proved a useful resource. "Many a lady has found in her pencil a means of subsistence for herself and her family."* Nor need those who can enjoy the beauties of the universe, accompanied by skill in the delineative art, ever dread the languor of vacant hours.

Though our serious pursuits should be directed to important subjects, frequent interruption, and that for long intervals, is indispensable. Nature demands their cessation, in which the benefit of obeying her mandate soon appears: for "he that will make a good use of any part of his life, must allow a large part of it to recreation,"† emphatically designed "the breathing of the soul, which otherwise would be stifled with continual business."‡ But among the recreations of mankind, there is not

* *Williams*, Tour in Switzerland, vol. i. p. 26.

† *Locke* on Education, loc. cit.

‡ *Fuller*, Holy State, Book III. chap. 13. p. 171.

less diversity than among their serious pursuits, in-
somuch that in their reciprocation what is labour to
one proves a refreshing pleasure to his fellow.

The language of the schools established a dis-
tinction between the liberal and illiberal arts, as-
cribing intellectual acquirements only to the for-
mer, and those practical attainments which are the
subject of manual dexterity to the latter. Two
classes, technically designed *trivium* and *quadrivi-
um*, were formed of the liberal arts, of which one
comprehended grammar, logic, and rhetoric, and
the other arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and
music; and the disciple who became master of the
whole, was understood to have reached the pinnacle
of erudition. But operative works of manual ex-
ercise, commonly being the province of the meaner
people, were despised as an occupation for those of
better extraction: Nor does it appear that some
most ingenious and interesting branches of the arts,
and the best adapted for relieving mental lassitude,
ever were esteemed as their proper office.* At
certain periods of the darker ages, even learning
itself seems to have fallen out of repute, or to have
yielded its importance to the dissolute habits of the
great. The ancients expected the ostensible pur-
suits of men to correspond to their station: they

* *Schopperus* de omnibus illiberalibus sive mechanicis arti-
bus, gives the reader a very competent idea of most of the arts
practised in the sixteenth century.

desired that governors should abide by the business of government, and soldiers by military enterprise. Whether the remarkable relaxation of the moderns from this principle contributes much to their embellishment, would admit of more discussion.—“The Syracusans, with indignation, beheld the deluded monarch Dionysius prevailed on by Dion’s insinuations, to part with his guard of 10,000 spearmen, to give up a navy of 400 galleys, to disband an army of 20,000 horse, and many times that number of foot, in order that he might pursue an ideal happiness in the academy, and amuse himself with theorems of geometry, while the substantial enjoyments of wealth and power were left to Dion and the children of Aristomachus.” The ancients, however, could appreciate the benefit of those arts which led to a useful purpose; nor, whoever was the agent, did they censure the practice if the design was important: and they could well distinguish what was suitable to publicity or retirement. Nero, though skilful in certain arts, was despised for their exhibition. Dioclesian cultivated his little garden in privacy, without reproach. The real character of mankind is discoverable alike from their sports and their studies, as both originate in predominant propensities. But “the elevation of the mind ought to be the principal end of all studies, which, if they do not in some measure effect, they are of very little service to us.”* Hence may recreation tend to

* *Burke on the Sublime and Beautiful, Part i. § 19.*

utility. In contrasting the occupations of princes, Plutarch observes, that "Æropus, king of Macedonia, spent his hours of leisure in making little tables and lamps: Attalus, surnamed Philometor, amused himself with planting poisonous herbs, not only henbane and hellebore, but hemlock, aconite, and dorycnium. These he cultivated in the royal gardens; and beside gathering them at their proper seasons, made it his business to know the qualities of their juices and fruits: and the kings of Parthia took a pride in forging and sharpening heads for their arrows. But the mechanics of Demetrius were of a princely kind: there was always something grand in their fabric. Together with a spirit of curiosity and love of the arts, there appeared a grandeur of design and dignity of invention; so they were not only worth the genius and wealth, but of the hand of a king."*

Some of the most illustrious have soothed their leisure hours in useful and agreeable occupations, uniting philosophical contemplation to the practice of elegant accomplishments and interesting arts. Sometimes the fountains of knowledge, when opened in youth, have gratefully contributed their swelling streams to advancing age; and where admixture with the busy throng, or the vacant multitude, forbid the mind from reposing on itself, public duties have been intermingled with laudable

* *Plutarch in vita Demetrii.*

recreations. "Hadrian, the Roman Emperor, was extremely versant in poetry, and in all literature; he was deeply skilled in arithmetic, geometry, and painting," and excelled in the practice of music.* No sovereign has been more justly celebrated than Antoninus, whose profound meditations illustrate the most cultivated mind. Septimius Severus is said to have been master of philosophy, and eminent in literature.† Nor should the Emperor Julian or Leo the philosopher be omitted, whose works exhibit intelligence far superior to the ordinary learning of their respective æra.

But mankind are always eccentric, and each successive period has its transient fashion. As there were ages when the toil of literature was not deemed essential to the great or the opulent, and where mental ornament was abandoned chiefly to those of inferior condition, so have personal accomplishments been intermingled with such feats of dexterity, as might have rather embellished a mountebank than have given character to princes. The biographer of Charlemagne celebrates him as the first swimmer of his times: yet he was so illiterate that he could not write; for he had begun late, and succeeded ill.‡ Among the qualities of a Northern Prince, Olaf Tryggvason, who excelled in courage, strength,

* *Ælius Spartianus*, *Hadrianus Imperator*, cap. 14.

† *Eutropius*, lib. viii. cap. 9.

‡ *Eginhartus de Vita et Gestis Caroli Magni*, p. 107. 119.

and agility, are included his dexterity in walking along the oars on the outside of his vessel while the boatmen were rowing, and at the same time keeping up three darts constantly in the air!*

In later ages, the amusements of Charles IX. of France comprehended the manufacture of fire-arms and horse-shoes; and still more extraordinary, he would behead asses before his courtiers, paying their owner the price; or he killed swine, thrusting forth his bloody hands like a servant in a slaughter-house.†

Alike inglorious were the propensities of his brother and successor Henry III. "I shall never forget," says Sully, "the strange dress and attitude in which I found this prince in his cabinet. He had a sword by his side, a cloak over his shoulders, he wore a cap, and had a basket of whelps suspended by a broad ribband from his neck."‡ He and his queen were wont to traverse all Paris in quest of lap-dogs; and, "to the great regret of the ladies to whom they belonged, they also sought them in the neighbouring convents." He assumed female apparel, or exhibited himself as an Amazon with his breast bare at masquerades or festivities; and his favourite occupations in private respected his own and the dress of his consort.§ Masson, the biographer of Charles IX. ascribes his sangui-

* *Snorro Historia Regum Norvegicorum*, tom. i. p. 290.

† *Masson ap. Castelnau Memoires*, tom. iii. p. 18.

‡ *Sully Memoires*, liv. ii. ad an. 1586, tom. i. p. 211.

§ *L'Etoile Journal*, tom. i. p. 16. 21. 23. ad an. 1575.

nary propensities to an insatiable predilection for the sports of the field from his earliest youth, but seems anxious to signify that he never indulged them on any human being.

The sports of the field, gymnastic exercises, and certain feats of address, are the original pursuits of mankind, from contributing to their preservation in the time of peace, and to their defence in time of war. They remain unaltered until supervening improvements induce their participators to enclose themselves in cities, and vary their diversions according to the space in which they may be conducted. Where a contest is waged with ferocious animals, carrying devastation along with them, or where the unwieldy carcass shall serve for the subsistence of tribes, utility accompanies the chase, and the credit of the huntsman is rated by the object of his capture. But is the preparation of a vast apparatus to reap an ignoble victory over a timid creature, which flies affrighted from its own shadow, to be called rational?—Is wounding or maiming those beings which cannot injure us, or taking away that life which we have not given, and are unable to restore, to be the subject of our recreations?

Where, in the list of amusements, should we place the encouragement offered to ruffians to beat and bruise each other, while disclaiming all animosity, until either is incapable of resistance?—Or, what estimation are they to hold, who quit their own proper position, to assume the garb, the dia-

lect, and the occupation of their servants, in order to evince their dexterity?—The character of the vulgar may be determined by their sports: grovelling minds addict themselves to low pursuits; and barbarians are ferocious.* “A man of sense does not divert himself with dancing on the ropes or juggling, but he makes choice of genteel exercises, and none blames him on that account. Let us have noble diversions that are proper for us, and by recreating us give us encouragement to return to our work.”†

When the world constitutes the spectators, magnanimity should indicate the pursuits of the illustrious, as the conduct of mankind must be consistent.

Emulation has cost much time, and many sacrifices have been made for the attainment of dexterity, which unless of the most exalted or of the most trivial kind, is seldom befitting any but the vulgar. How degrading is it to behold those who should remain spectators become the spectacle, by entering the lists always assigned to the mean, merely for the fame of dexterity! We can never persuade ourselves that it is their proper place: and of all others, the great have to beware of bringing their accomplishments publicly into competition, though they may very suitably enliven private hours.

* *Morse*, American Geography, p. 418, respecting the people putting out each others eyes in their broils.

† *Muralt*, Letters, p. 184.



It is better to contend with things than with men. If victory then confers less renown, failure induces less disgrace. We shall find it safer to confide in our own vigour for conquest, than trusting to succeed from another's weakness, and it will afford more durable pleasure.

That whatever is undertaken should be as well executed as circumstances admit, is desirable; but it is still more desirable that nothing inconsistent should be contemplated.

The approbation of dexterity depends so much on the previous experience, the temper, and disposition of the spectator, that talents may be fruitlessly displayed by one the most earnest for celebrity; and however distinguished, he is always in danger of being excelled by the next rival in his art. Besides being very differently appreciated, it is commonly more entertaining to behold than useful to practise. The ancients relate, that a Cyrenian, pluming himself on his skill, drove his chariot repeatedly round the race course without the smallest deviation of the track of the wheels, to the great astonishment of the spectators: "but Plato reprehended his anxiety to become expert in such a trifling matter, while neglecting things of real consequence."

Imitation is despicable; but lowest of all are claims for the dexterity of imitation as an accomplishment. It is sufficiently entertaining, indeed, and certainly a curious contrivance, that one shall

endeavour to step out of his own nature to assume the nature of other men, other creatures, or other things. Masks have been invented as the veil of turpitude and folly, as well as to screen the modest.*

Let us not be too censorious, however, from recollecting that we have not entirely the choice of our own mode of life; and that in compliance with circumstances, we must engage in what is productive of pleasure, though of an inferior character, if preventing the evils of idleness. Nay, it is preferable to occupy ourselves in matters of lesser consequence, to becoming impatient to escape from our own society:—"And as often as the more important offices of virtue allow any intervals, our time is agreeably and honourably employed in history, natural or civil, in geometry, astronomy, poetry, painting, music, or such entertainments as ingenious arts afford."†

Recreation is to the studious what rest is to the weary. Our social habits also demand that we shall not be ignorant of such games and pastimes as train the person in healthful exercise, or renovate the mind for wholesome industry. Shunning the dire effects

* Anciently some one refused to go to hear a person imitate the nightingale, because he had heard the nightingale itself. In our æra, it is remarkable that all musical performers attempt the imitation of other instruments than their own, as if the character, that is the quality of each, might be dispensed with:—an unaccountable error. But the ventriloquist has reached the zenith of imitation. No limits restrain his art. *Le Ventriloque ou l'Engastrimythe*, 2 tom. in 12mo.

† *Hutcheson, Moral Philosophy, Book I. chap. vii. § 5.*

of midnight revels, restraining the emulative passions, which foster avarice, and kindle the rage of disappointment, it is doubtful whether time may not be thus more profitably spent in amusement, than to admit our becoming a prey to discontent from vacuity. But it is often too dangerous to tread the quicksands of hazard: it is tragical to embark in enterprise, where the probabilities of success and of failure are alike, but where failure would involve perdition: it is too difficult to allay the host of demons conjured up by deceitful hopes, and unexpected frustrations. Though the rules of polished intercourse demand our corresponding with the customs of our neighbours, ought we heedlessly to comply with those conditions which may result in the invasion, nay, the eternal ruin of our tranquillity?

It is entertaining to review the different pastimes which have successively interested the inhabitants of a country during the lapse of ages: to consider how they originate and flourish; how the celebrity of some which are most in vogue declines; and at length why they are not only totally abandoned, but the recollection of them lost.*

Pastimes are useful, from being an agreeable relaxation; but to participate in pageantry, in shows, and processions, except on the rarest occasions, be-

* *Strutt*, Sports and Pastimes of the People of England, affords a copious view of this subject, on which several detached treatises may be found. There are many tracts on the public games of the Greeks and Romans.

trays a desire for puerile gratifications, at the expense of good taste and reason. They are well adapted to the stage, because we go there to be diverted; and from the low condition of the modern drama requiring much decorative aid; but that sober citizens shall put on the apparel of mountebanks, and parade themselves, their masters, or servants, embellished by flags and streamers, or accompanied by drums and trumpets, for the gaze of the rabble, is neither prudent nor decorous. Unsited to any of the rational purposes of life, they may truly be designed the absurdities of pastime.

Some, averse to labour and discipline, complain that they have not patience to study history, that they want resolution to encounter the sciences, that they have no taste for the arts. No one knows the strength of his own genius untried. Many will find themselves mistaken. Besides, perfection is not indispensable in mental attainments, more than remarkable dexterity in personal exercises: only so much skill in either is suitable as can be conveniently acquired; and although proficiency be excellent, we must be content with something less, if but in quest of the pleasing occupation of time. Moderate attention, however, soon leads to greater familiarity with preferable studies, and at length the energetic embark in excursions for scientific discovery. Indolence springs from idleness; both are ruinous to our peace: but as flowers and verdure clothe the barren waste by cultivation, so will the

profitable employment of time contribute to intellectual riches.

The character of genius, like the name of great, is grossly misapplied; nor are we blindly to coincide in the lavish dispensation of either: for some, whose immortal fame was confidently foretold by their partial contemporaries, have been altogether forgot by the succeeding generation.

Although it be not easy to define genius, its presence is denoted by the facility and variety of acquisitions, not slightly scanned, but carried far on the way towards that perfectibility of which they are susceptible. It consists as much in the acute solution of problematic truths, in just and energetic views of things, as in brilliant conceptions, or meteoric flashes of observation, which dazzle without illuminating the mind, and leave us in pristine darkness as they vanish. Yet a shallow orator, in appealing to the passions, can by this means carry away his audience, especially if they be disposed to confound fluency with eloquence. Wild and uncorrected imagination, we repeat, is no testimony of genius; for the combinations originating from its variety must form a perfect whole. A true mechanic wastes none of the mechanical powers in constructing his machine: a skilful painter never abuses nature by the disproportion, the dullness, nor the glare of art. Failure in delicacy and grace, where they should adorn, denotes defective genius in defective perception or execution, for quality demands congruity. Some-

times strong demonstrations of genius are shewn in an insatiable curiosity to know every science, and to practise every art ; while, on the shortest advances, each is successively abandoned for a new pursuit. But men who would perform well must perform little. All the products of real genius require to be tardily ripened by judgment in the womb of time : nor can the ablest artist perfect a noble task with hurry.* Those attempting much never succeed with the discerning observer, or preserve a satisfactory retrospect to themselves.†

Aristotle affirms, that melancholy is concomitant on genius. Inventive fancy, indeed, or the higher intellectual operations, are far withdrawn from mirth and humour, the banishers of meditation.

It is not uncommon for strangers to regret the misapplication of talent as they conceive it, and to conjecture that preferable objects of pursuit might be adopted for those that have been chosen. But many men are precluded from following the proper bent of their inclination, in prosecuting that wherein they are qualified to excel. Their ardour leads them to approximate what they chiefly favour as nearly as possible to their chief employment : they take what is most accessible as well as most congenial ; and

* *Morhof* Polyhistor, lib. ii. cap. 8. § 50 : In omni tamen studiorum genere velocitas et nimia festinatio vitanda est.

† *Reflections* on our Common Failings, p. 157 : " The publishing a volume every year is a sure sign of an indifferent judgment."

sometimes nature breaking forth, subverts a proffered plan to substitute one altogether different. It is erroneous to believe, however, that a person shall shine as a principal, who only, as an accessory, testifies high qualifications: that although having a predilection for certain pursuits at leisure hours, they will be the farthest advanced when his exclusive occupation. Talents may become eminent in a particular branch of literature or the arts, which would not appear respectable when applied to any other. Remarkable combinations are seen; but probably it would be futile attempting to convert a herald to a natural philosopher, or to make a poet an historian. Few painters have ventured on sculpture. Nay, the highest talent may prove incapable of uniting pursuits apparently analogous, either theoretical or practical. A good mathematician is frequently an indifferent mechanic; and although the art of the latter rests exclusively on the principles expounded by the former, he is often incapable of demonstrating their application to his own works. There is always a great distance between theory and practice. Genius, nevertheless, is disposed to remarkable modifications: but having once made its election, by some sympathetic relation between the mind and the object, too obscure for explanation, it cannot be controlled, though in many respects it may be usefully directed.

Certain situations, scenes, and objects, awaken our dormant energies or sensations; animating, ex-

alting, or depressing the soul, and eliciting an uncommon fertility of resources. Then do sublime ideas carry the flow of imagination throughout unknown regions in its roaming,—the poet is lost in his reverie.

Eccentricity, or that aberration from regular courses of thinking and action, which education and self-controul might have corrected, though reconcilable with study, seems to have no alliance to genius. Descartes, a celebrated philosopher, went to bed to promote his most profound reflections, and drawing the curtains around him, remained enveloped in darkness. Cujacius, an eminent lawyer, laid himself prostrate on the floor, amidst his books, for ready consultation. Fortius kept a kind of tablets, whereon he could inscribe his ideas in the interval of nocturnal slumbers, and Morhof thus composed many verses while deprived of sleep. Haydn, the most distinguished composer of modern times, felt his fancy enlivened by wearing a ring which he had received from Frederic of Prussia. Another preferred the glimmering of a lamp: and Sarti, a pleasing musician, found himself dependant on the presence of his mistress, and some favourite animals.—So are habits acquired.

Too much leisure often renders mankind unhappy, and it is painful to behold any one anxiously studying how to divert himself. The sports of the field are transient: an associate must participate in games: reading demands composure: he is not mas-



ter of any solitary accomplishment: and at length it is seen that he must either remain inactive, or perhaps merely put himself in motion for pastime. Practical or anticipated employment, is one of the sure pillars of felicity.

Labour to one may be avocation to another. Yet employment softens exile, and makes the prisoner believe himself free. The learned Ockley, who was professor of Arabic, declares, on issuing a volume of his History of the Saracens from his confinement in Cambridge Castle, that "he had enjoyed more true liberty, and more solid repose," than before.* Thus are the dreary hours of solitary confinement best dissipated. Some unhappy person cut figures and landscapes on the wooden bars of the cage of St Michael, to shorten the tedium of existence. Masers de la Tude tamed the rats, as Pelisson did the spiders infesting his apartment; yet the merciless jailors are said to have cut off even this humble consolation of solitude. A pigeon having sought an asylum in the prison of another, he contrived to catch a companion to it, and relieved the burden of his reflections from the amusement they afforded him. How unreasonable are our expectations with the world at command, but how little contents us as our sphere of enjoyment is gradually restricted! At first the jailor claimed the forfeiture of a small portion of his provisions, for allowing him

* Ockley, History of the Saracens, vol. ii. Introduction, p. 17.

to keep them: next his contributions were heavier; and at length his demands becoming intolerable, the prisoner himself killed the innocent creatures in a fit of despair. We have been accustomed to eulogiums on jailors in this country: let us beware of praising those invested with despotism. But some, like Ockley, have derived enjoyment under restraint, from the subject of their more solid pursuits while in the possession of liberty. The ornaments of the prisoner's mind accompany him to beguile his captivity: Epictetus and Æsop were slaves, and Diogenes was bought and sold; Plato has inscribed his work on the immortality of the soul with the name of the slave Phædon; Plautus is said to have written comedies while in confinement; a more important work, the *Consolations of Philosophy*, came from Boetius in the tower of Pavia: interesting dissertations on certain antiquities from Hieronymus Magius elsewhere: and Sir Walter Raleigh devoted the period of his imprisonment in the Tower of London to the composition of his *History of the World*, "which," said the Lord Chief Justice Coke on his trial, "is an admirable work."

They who can thus employ their hours of restraint in interesting exercises, must enjoy more real felicity than those at large who have none.

But our opinions of restraint are most erroneous. Let us enter the booth of an artizan, where he is pent up during his whole existence. We can hardly breathe: we call it an intolerable pri-

son. Looking around to the new and multifarious implements of his art, and contemplating the rich and beautiful products issuing from his ingenuity, we retire almost envying such interesting occupation, whereby had we equal capacity we might enliven many a tedious day of langour. This little spot is the world to its tenant.

Our comforts are seldom so few but they may be abridged. We blame others, while the fault is our own.

With the command of time, it is our duty to spend it well; and we shall the less regret the rapidity of its flight, provided something remains to recall its profitable employment. The improvement of the mind, and the government of the manners, are great undertakings, which will be successful according to our skill, our assiduity, and patience. Let us remember that nothing can be done for the person, because it comes perfect from the hand of nature; but scarcely more than mere capacity is gifted along with the mind. Our utmost exertions to embellish the former must be restricted to the meanest operations: the latter has to be cultivated by the steady prosecution of a regular course, if we hope to reap that luxuriant return which only a stubborn soil will refuse. Yet so many of nature's propensities warring against virtue have to be abrogated or repressed, that we must struggle hard for the victory; nor ought we to be too confident that original or early pravity shall not resume its con-

tention against us in the rebellion of vice. The glorious fruits of our conquest are seen in the subjugation of the passions which would have disturbed our peace, and in the substitution of diligence, industry, complacence, and all the benevolent affections of the mind. That of which we had heard in theory, now belongs to us in practice: we have occupied our time in becoming what we desired to be. Although the most virtuous, learned, and accomplished of men, must find many things in reviewing his own life, of which his experience now disapproves, the retrospect will not be dissatisfactory on the whole from having done his best; for so long as perfection, together with prescience, are denied to mankind, nothing can be expected above endeavouring to do well.

CHAPTER IV.

SKETCHES OF SUITABLE CONDUCT THROUGHOUT LIFE.

OUR entrance of the world follows an unknown and irresistible decree. We are permitted to remain a certain time subjected to certain conditions ; which being fulfilled, our existence must cease ; for permanence is inconsistent with human animation, and adverse to the great ordinances regulating the vitality of the universe. The result of some of our natural propensities, and of some of the accidents over which we have no controul, together with their correction or evasion, has been already illustrated. But as it is a logical deduction, that man, from his faculty of volition, and his personal powers, is a free agent, in several instances at least, and as he is undoubtedly capable of modifying the fervour of his passions, it becomes important to enlarge our views of those qualities sensibly operating on the comfort of his social relations.

In so far as human infirmity will allow, it is incumbent on us to lead a course of life innocent and irreproachable, useful to ourselves, useful to our neighbours. We should regularly advance towards the fulfilment of those prudential resolutions which

reason has matured ; nor ought we to be deterred from suitable actions, by vain apprehensions of disapprobation, or even by serious impediments opposed. Profiting by our own experience, or judging by the fortunes of others, we must adapt our conduct to our circumstances, and act as well as we are able.

The ancients taught the regulation of all human conduct by the observance of four great virtues,—Prudence, Fortitude, Temperance, and Justice. They held, that an upright life is void of perturbation and care, while the reverse is productive of nothing except trouble and sorrow : And certainly those who seal their practice of justice, temperance, and fortitude with prudence, will not go far astray.

But the necessary illustrations being partly anticipated which would arise from a corresponding order of discussion, and this subject being better adapted to a regular system of moral science than the more desultory tenor of these pages, we shall be content with generally defining the suitable conduct of mankind as the habitual love of virtue, and the visible abhorrence of vice ; followed by an observance of the maxims which shall be thence inspired.

Impartial views of human nature will estimate the ordinary disposition of man as under the influence of strong propensities in respect to himself, and warm susceptibilities in relation to his neighbours ; as firmly bound down by social compacts, which his inclinations are continually urging him

to infringe, and liable, from the pressure of circumstances, to deviate from that course which, if left entirely to himself, he might be willing to pursue.

While we should only consider the perfectibility of man, that is, how he may be improved, we are apt to form too elevated notions of his race. In our highest stage, however, we are very remote from real exaltation: we are full of imperfections; we abound in error; and no sooner do we permit our mental restraints and energies to relax, than straightway are all the sublime emotions of the soul borne downwards by resistless proclivity, towards that degradation from whence they had arisen.

The excellence of the heart is elicited by cultivation only. Previous to entering upon it, the instincts of man are little superior to those of the creatures which, like himself, draw their sustenance from the produce of the earth. Any original virtues he possesses seem to be chiefly unfolded by the tacit inspirations of relationship, or the feeling of his personal dependence: his benevolence is weaker than his selfishness, his courage is lower than his cunning; he has no knowledge, he practises no arts, he is destitute of refinement. He yields to his propensities because he finds gratification in their indulgence, and his pleasures in the aboriginal state are regulated by nature. Forsaking them, his mind soars higher; and as it expands in the conception of those grand virtues which shall render life illustrious, he comes to abhor the meanness of his pris-

tine condition, and recoils from the impulses which he was so ready to obey.

When united in society, we find leading precepts of suitable conduct also founded on moderation as restraining ourselves, and benevolence as sustaining our neighbours; the one always preventing an evil action, the other always prompting that which is good.

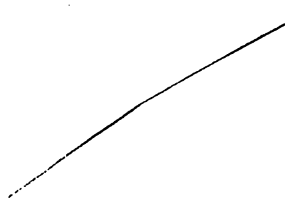
In an abstract view, we cannot perceive any great difficulty in estimating right or wrong, therefore we determine that the rules of moral conduct may be few, precise, and special. But to whom are they directed? To those as yet untutored by discipline, disturbed by prejudices, corrupted by fashions, impatient of controul. As we always reason from the greatest conviction, when guided by our own experience, we consider as virtues those qualities from which we have reaped a sensible benefit; and as vices, those defects from which we have suffered, or which are menacing to society. We call the mild the modest, the meek and humble, good; for they are neither arrogant nor injurious.

Moralists wisely contemplate evil from a distance; and without awaiting its presence, they desire to provide a defensive armour against it.

But although their system be such as would lead to a happy life, its precepts yield before human imperfections, and they are disappointed by the force of innate pravity. They first discover, that all the advantages of their own knowledge are fruitless,

unless by removing the proselyte from his aboriginal state, and inspiring him with dignity of sentiment and action, as the most powerful incentives to virtue, and the most formidable barriers against vice ; that delicacy must flow from the mind, and that improvement is hopeless if, in the love of a mean condition, those benefits constituting the excellence of man, and the real enjoyments of existence, be despised. The melioration of human fortunes is found in aspiring to civilization in the preference of the social duties, in prizing honour and glory, and in seeking that praise which is the certain reward of virtue. Degrading the conditions of the social compact, must lead to its dissolution : impairing intellectual refinement, by admitting contamination of the purity and elegance sustaining the dignity of the mind, will lower it to the dust in the decay of generous sentiment. Between virtue and vice, between meanness and magnanimity, no relation can be traced ; nor without delicacy of sentiment can delicacy of conduct subsist. The primary office of moralists, therefore, is to prepare the proselyte for instruction in adapting his mind for its reception.

But sometimes as the theologian promises pleasure to gain converts, he has to admit the indulgence of certain propensities, or to flatter the passions in softening the soul ; he finds a variable appreciation of vice, nor the estimate of excellence itself agreed on by men ; for one calls it wisdom,



and another virtue, two qualities invaluable in themselves, though void of reciprocal analogy.*

Mankind are the slaves of habit, and their sense of wrong is modified by custom or selfishness. Destroying the messenger of evil tidings, hastening from persons in danger, parricide, or infanticide, assigning the place of honour to the vicious, strike us with abhorrence.† But whatever be the secondary fashions of the world, they are all imitations: first we imitate, then we adopt or practise. We are surprised and disturbed by great or unexpected changes. We embark in a calm, but the rolling of the vessel, with the rising tempest, seems dreadful. Those familiar with it think only of taking the easiest position: and the mariner is satisfied with the gale if it favours his progress. Repulsive customs cease to be abhorrent when mankind become inured to them; and that which is odious in the eyes of the just and humane, is followed with unconcern.

Nevertheless, there are certain obvious rules, under the guidance of which we are insensibly reduced by our social state; nor, let it be repeated, if ob-

* *Job* xxviii. 18, 19: "For the price of *wisdom* is above rubies; the topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be purchased with pure gold."—*Plato* de Legibus, lib. v: All the gold which is above the earth, or in it, cannot be compared to *virtue*.

† *Zosimus* Novæ Historiæ, lib. iii. *Campbell*, Travels in Southern Africa, p. 428, 515. *Lichtenstein*, Travels in Southern Africa, vol. i. p. 258. *Strabo*, lib. x.

serving temperance, fortitude, justice, and prudence, can we be guilty of great omissions.

§ 1. *Temperance*.—What is the grand aim of Nature? It is pleasure. For this has all the delicacy of sensation been imparted to her creatures; for this have their propensities and passions been gifted, conjoined with the susceptibilities of enjoyment. If presuming to declare, that the great Artist of the universe has occupied himself in vain formations, we arrogantly judge in our ignorance. But shall we dare to maintain, that what is given is given fruitlessly, that the objects exciting our appetites have a nugatory existence, that no utility is to be derived from the exquisite feelings which we possess? Shall we venture to assume, that the earth and air, and fire and water, are superfluous, and unproductive of intended benefit? If we hunger, food is grateful; because it is the medium of protracting survivance, it is necessary; and survivance is essential, because the waste of nature must be replenished in the world. Were there no food we should not hunger: there would be no lassitude were there no repose. But it is through the excitation of pleasure that the great purposes of nature are to be fulfilled in the conservation of individuals, and the conservation of their race: and although the latter does seem to have been provided for with greater solicitude, all external impulse on man, and internal excitation, tend to provide for satisfaction, and to promote enjoyment. We cannot affirm whether greater secu-

rity against disease or accident would admit of the highest delicacy of animal organization ; or whether refined susceptibilities would not be impaired by increasing insensibility. Many years are consumed in progression and maturity : only a small proportion of life is forfeited by age ; while from the moment of birth, casualties are constantly exacting its sacrifice. A corresponding waste, which may be immeasurably aggravated, seems nearly to balance the new evolutions in preparation to occupy the earth.

To dispute the goodness of pleasure by refusing the testimony of sensation, the only evidence of what is personal to ourselves, is denying the divine intention in our favour. Its distribution throughout the world, and being plainly put within our reach, signifies that it may be for human profit ; and that the **most interesting portion of existence remains neutral**, by rejecting the milder influence of those passions conducive to our welfare.

Nothing evil in itself is inherent in the pursuit of pleasure ; it is not irreconcilable with the most virtuous propensities : but obstinately despising it when held forth under an innocent aspect, denotes an indifference inconsistent with the real nature of mankind.*

Taste may prefer the acid or the sweet : the sight may prefer the blue or the green. These are cer-

* *Aristotle Ethic. lib. ii. § 2.—Lib. viii. § 5.*

tain pleasures of sense. But, void of ebriety, there is nothing more reprehensible in draughts of wine than in draughts of water. We may safely conform to the evident design of nature, in so far as partaking of innocent enjoyments; nor is she to be blamed for having made our susceptibilities exquisite.

Pain is the character of all evil affecting our sensations, and pleasure is the sum of all good. But the simple absence of pain being a state of only passive indifference, we solicit something more, and embark in the pursuit of pleasure.

Although no real evil be inherent in the constitution of pleasure, we must look to the ulterior consequence of self-indulgence, and whether it may not lead to greater inconvenience than satisfaction. If it be not held secondary to the more important concerns of life, if mankind renounce their moral duties to fly into its arms, they abandon the proper purposes of existence, and are injurious in their example.

All the rational engage in advancing their personal comfort, and in promoting intellectual refinement, to prepare for intellectual pleasures. The asperity of the seasons has been called a kind of natural penalty inflicted on their feelings; yet no one has thought it wrong to take shelter from the storm. Certain kinds of food are nauseous to the taste; we are not blamed for rejecting them. But as it has pleased the great Creator to have conjoined susceptibility of the greatest suffering

along with susceptibility of the most exquisite enjoyments, while we endeavour to seize on the latter alone, human life must be necessarily an intermixture of both.

Epicurus, an ancient philosopher, maintained, that "life cannot be agreeable without prudence, honesty, and justice: nor with prudence, honesty, and justice, can it be otherwise than agreeable."* But Epicurus also "held nothing good, if the pleasures of taste, and of love, and of what is beautiful to the eye, and agreeable to the ear, were taken away;" that is, we are not to refuse the gratification of those senses and appetites received by the gift of nature.

But it is essential to our own safety, and the well-being of society, that we shall not unsparingly avail ourselves of all the appetites which have been bestowed upon us; for even innocent enjoyments require to be reined in with a steady hand, lest conducting us to that state where the pleasures of sense enthrall reason. We are not precipitately to embark amidst the delights of the world though within our power, more than we should seize on every transient profit without previous enquiry whether possession may not bring inconvenience.

The immoderate pursuit of pleasure is the same as consenting to the absolute empire of the passions.

* *Diogenes Laertius*, lib. x. § 6. 140. *Cicero Quest. Tusc.* lib. iii. § 18.

But it is sensuality which is especially reprehensible, as vitiating the mind, and enervating the person, by plunging us amidst dangerous excesses.

When personal and mental enjoyment are put within our reach, the widest indulgence of the one may be taken, along with the most restricted participation of the other. An ardent thirst for knowledge, the study and cultivation of the arts, confer the highest intellectual pleasures; while sensualities enfeeble the person, they contribute to invigorate the mind; and in promoting peaceful content, they are productive of a happy condition.

Let us estimate the conduct and the disposition of the man of pleasure. All his views are bent towards those external objects which can be converted to the indulgence of himself: he has no internal fund of permanent enjoyment. He has become narrow-minded, selfish, and sensual, from holding the first place in his own reflections; his immediate consideration is the arrival of that moment which shall bring him new gratifications. He is content with their solitary participation; for selfishness blunting benevolence, he seeks after neither friend nor companion with whom it will please him to see them shared. Not having tempered his desires, luxurious habits perhaps engender prodigality, and an inconvenient profusion encourages a multitude of other vices, unfitting him for the duties of sociality, or of active life. Indolent and listless in all but the pursuit of what may promise some

excitement of the appetites, or appeasing their insatiable call, he is alike neglectful of such personal accomplishments as are grateful in their exercise, and of those mental treasures which might be ornamental in society, and his delight in solitude. If the man of pleasure be disappointed in the full round of enjoyments, repining and discontent, together with their wonted concomitants impatience or discord, ensue; if it be obtained, as it is used without moderation, the mind, already weak for want of worthy stimulants, is attended by corporeal decay; for both are undermined by intemperance.

Thus are the votaries of pleasure entirely wrapt up in themselves; the ultimatum of their pursuits is self—for the selfish are the last to consider their neighbours.

Some men, as if life were too short, and ignorant of its proper purpose, think of nothing but sensual enjoyments. Dissatisfied with the ordinary benefits held forth by nature for their acceptance, and despising the real gratification which health and content may procure, they forsake the purer sources of intellectual delight to contrive a new series of fading pleasures.* The epitaph of a voluptuary monarch is said to have been written thus by himself: "I have reigned; and so long as the sun shone

* *Ælius Lampridius*, *Heliogabalus*, § 19: "Nec erit ei ulla vita nisi exquirere novæ voluptates."

upon me, I ate, I drank, and I gratified myself in all sensualities, knowing the brevity of human life; and that even its span is disturbed by vicissitudes and trouble. Aware that others must soon enjoy the fruits of my present possessions, I have never abstained a day from indulgence." * But how can life be pleasing, says Cicero, if prudence and moderation be deficient? for this inscription, which signifies that enjoyment alone was followed, might have been written on any of the animal creation. †

The real necessities of all mankind are nearly alike. It takes little to satisfy nature; nor can our whole ingenuity force upon it more than it will receive. Our appetite for food, our inclination for repose, do not belong to our own choice. We cannot command, nor can we dispense with, either. If it takes little to satisfy nature, the rest of our wants, we should call them wishes, are of an artificial kind, which may be set aside, and which resolution or self-denial can easily confine within the bounds of moderation. "My apparel," said Anacharsis to Hanno, "is a Scythian cloak: the hardened soles of my feet, my shoes; the ground is my bed; hunger my seasoning; I subsist on milk, cheese, meat. Wherefore, then, wouldst thou

* *Arrian*, lib. ii. abbreviates this inscription on Sardana-palus. *Athenæus*, lib. xii. cap. 39. quotes a passage to shew that Cyrus levelled his lofty monument at the siege of Nineveh.

† *Cicero*, *Quæst. Tusc.* lib. v. § 35.

come hither?"* But it seems as if we felt ashamed of temperance or moderation, and to confess the restriction of our wants, lest we might be reproached with poverty in being frugal.† We are too anxious to have it believed that we can subsist without labour, and that we may gratify our propensities. But there is no disgrace in simplicity of manners, in industry, and frugality: they are an humble exterior in our eyes; yet if the covering of internal virtue, the casket will not be the less precious from shining by its own lustre. It is better to remain in a salubrious state, than to seek convalescence from medicine: therefore, temperance being a chief preserver of health, and frugality from excesses, they are alike worthy of observance. Sensuality, luxury, and profusion, spring out of each other, and urge us to uncontrolled indulgence, which we are dissatisfied should be abridged, which unfits us for serious occupations, and incurs contempt or envy from the needy or the wise. Hence the essential benefit of learning to be content with little. The names of the voluntarily temperate and the frugal, of those who, disclaiming effeminate gratifications, have opposed themselves to nature and necessity, are always upheld for eminent example. We cannot forget the best

* *Cicero* *Quest. Tusc. lib. v. § 32.*

† *Livy*, lib. xxxiv. cap. 4: *Pessimus quidem pudor est vel parsimonie vel paupertatis.*

and most celebrated, to imitate the weak and dissolute. But who are we so full of pretension to gaudy attire, to delicate food, and luxurious indulgence? The sons of sober citizens perhaps, or country peasants, who were content to take their mess by fire light, and went to bed in the dark,—who rose to their labours with the dawn, and forsook them as the sun went down: yet were they healthful and happy, and prayed that their children might be like themselves. Are we better than our fathers? We embark in quest of pleasure, while our pursuit should be industry, temperance, or self-denial; for the most distinguished among men have set a laudable pattern. “The Emperor Julian was equally temperate in the palace and in the field; his repasts were short and slender; he was sparing of sleep, nor did he allow himself to indulge in gratifications. Julian shared all the fruits of conquest among his soldiers; he was liberal and enlightened, as well as moderate.”*

Innumerable inconveniences are generated by unrestrained indulgence. Those who cannot dispense with sleep, need not try to watch; those who cannot abridge their diet, need not venture where they must suffer those privations which warned aboriginal man of the value of temperance. Never having practised frugality, we know not the bounds within which our presumed necessities may be restricted,

* *Ammianus Marcellinus*, lib. xxv. cap. 20. *Zonaras Annals*, lib. xiii. cap. 12.

still admitting all reasonable enjoyments. Accustomed to profusion, we apprehend the smallest retrenchment to be intolerable; whereas we might discover that a great deal should be spared, because it is superfluous. Would not health be confirmed and perception refined, by reducing some part of what we must exert ourselves to consume? It is surprising with how much we can dispense. An ancient philosopher falling so low as to have nothing but herbs for subsistence, pacified his despondency when observing one of the animals of the creation content with a few crumbs.* When the mind is absorbed, we think less of the cravings of the person.

An ostentatious display of luxury is daily offered to our eyes: waste and profusion advance in each successive generation, as if their appetites increased with the age of the world. No one seems desirous to hear of the temperance or frugality seen in foreign countries: yet we are assured that the expenses of the table of the present Pontiff of Rome “never exceed five shillings a day;” those of Innocent XI. did not surpass half that sum; and it is said that Pope Sixtus V. restricted the daily charge for his table to about sixpence.†

In Britain, loud clamours constantly assail us of

* *Ælian*, *Varia Historiæ*, lib. xiii. c. 26.

† *Eustace*, *Classical Tour*, vol. iv. speaking of Pope Pius VI. Innocent XI. was elected in 1689: Sixtus V. in 1590.—*Mrs Piozzi*, *Journey through Italy*, vol. ii. p. 147, says, that “a man might live very well, I believe, for sixpence a day, and lodge for £20 a year,” at Rome.

mercantile distress and agricultural depression ; yet nowhere is beheld that praiseworthy practice of returning frugality, which had been abandoned in the delusion of temporary prosperity. Formerly the most reputable persons were wont to contend for distinction from intrinsic qualities, those which it was some honour to own : now there prevails a vain emulation among half the people for obtruding a show of prodigal gratifications, without recognising the slightest difference in the means of attainment. Opulence seems to grant nothing more : poverty will offer nothing less, as if prohibited from abating the thirst for splendour. Doubtless the rapid strides of prideful luxury in Great Britain are at this moment secretly undermining the resources of needy families, and storing up unforeseen calamities. What egregious folly !—that so many, forgetting the humility belonging to their condition, and the prudence which ought to govern their household, should wilfully impair their health, their fortune, or the morals and happiness of those around them : that, from disturbing the rules of propriety, imperative in respect to themselves, they should seduce the rising generation to light up midnight revels, where, fevered with intemperance, they are scarcely warned to retire before the dawn begins to blush on their indiscretions.

Had our ancestors less enjoyment of life than ourselves ?—They were not so solicitous, indeed, to enlarge their treasures, as to dispose of what they pos-

sessed in a creditable manner; and to hold the inheritance which they derived from their forefathers, as if in trust, to be delivered unimpaired to posterity. They knew, from the place which they occupied, that the splendour which was necessary for the great, and which contributed to sustain their dependents, was totally unsuitable to private persons.

It is consenting to vulgar opinion if enlargement of the necessities of mankind be admitted along with growing rank and opulence: if we testify how conscious we are of the change of our condition by an earnest display of prodigality.

The eye is taken with colours; but while some have delighted in gorgeous apparel, as if afraid that plainness would bring them into contempt, an affected love of simplicity has indicated pride rather than humility, and has made others trench on the boundaries of decency itself in stripping themselves of superfluity. If people are decorous according to their station, why should they be restrained of a little harmless vanity in desiring to appear respectable? Those who have enjoyments constantly at command, ought not to reproach their neighbours with only occasional indulgence. Archbishop Laud wore very plain apparel, and desiring all clergymen to follow his example, he expressed much displeasure when, "at a visitation in Essex, one in orders appeared before him in very gallant habit." Contrasting his own with it, he reproved the offender, who silenced the censor by observing, "My lord,

you have better clothes at home, and I have worse.”* But the weakness of soliciting respect for personal decoration, has been always very conspicuous among the multitude; and, in the time of Archbishop Laud, an English author exclaims, “O age, no cover now fits our mould, but plush, shag, velvet tissue, cloth of gold!”† In former times, however, and before the present amalgamation had confounded all orders of society, the quality of the man was connected with the quality of his apparel; whence extreme simplicity was not free of hazard, and partly explains the prevalent wish for ornament. Public ordinances also interposed to restrict the meaner classes from usurping what was appropriated for their superiors, that is, from assuming what would now render any one ridiculous.‡ But what seems to have been avoided and despised of old, is said to be advancing into more common use in part of this kingdom, so changeable are external fashions of apparel. Rodolphus, the first or second of that name, one of the Emperors of Germany, having gone abroad at Mentz on a morning when the air was piercing, clothed as an ordinary person, he entered a baker’s shop to warm himself at the dying embers which had heated the oven. Having sat down, the woman of the house, judging from

* *Lloyd, Memoirs*, p. 232.

† *Braithwaite, English Gentlewoman*, p. 173.

‡ *Strutt, View of the Dress and Habits of the People of England*, exhibits a regular series from their earliest history.

the apparel he wore, reproved his presumption : and when he called himself one of the Emperor's suite, she broke into furious invectives against his name, insisting that her house should be cleared. The Emperor shewing some reluctance to quit his comfortable position, she threw a vessel of boiling water among the embers, and thus drove him out with smoke and ashes.*

The temperate have always had to struggle with the luxurious ; and cautious governors have always endeavoured to protect their country by sumptuary laws ; but pride and prodigality have prevailed. The luxurious indulgence and extravagant profusion of the ancients is well known from history ; but the love of magnificence, or a vain ostentation, has shewn later ages to be as absurd. During the follies of chivalry, some one is said to have sown a field, which was to be the theatre of a tournament, with 20,000 pieces of silver ; another who, at the baptism of his son, entertained Pope Leo¹⁰ is said to have ordered every successive service of plate to be cast into the Tiber ; and the superintendant of the French finances, giving a fete to Louis XIV. in his castle, laid a purse of gold in the chamber of each courtier, that none might want money for play.

* *Lipsius Monita et Exempla Politica*, lib. ii. cap. 15. § 5. Rodolphus II. died in 1619.

The present plainness of apparel among men originated in the levelling principles of the neighbouring country.

Possessions seem to have been allotted to some men on purpose, that they might expose their folly; and the contagion of example has been ruinous to those who had none.

Prodigality carries imprudence as its ordinary companion along with it. Whether arising from pride or ostentation, from an emulation to excel at the expense of another's credit, it follows a culpable disregard of the true value of the benefits enjoyed, commonly to end in ruin: and as the oeconomy of our time, of our pleasures, of our fortune, are all most important precautions,—if the prodigal escapes, he is corrected by some other hand than his own.*

The immoderate pursuit of sensualities is never free of inconvenience: the voluptuary thinks only of gratification, and deems the time mis-spent which is otherwise occupied. “Daughter,” said a dying father, “you now behold all the residue of the melancholy remembrance of departing pleasures. My possession of them has been fleeting, and this is my only complaint against nature. But, alas, how vain are my regrets!—Do you who survive me make the most of your precious moments, and be scrupulous

* *Piozzi*, *British Synonymy*, vol. i. p. 359. A celebrated Italian singer, *Cuzzoni*, having fallen into a state of indigence, £350 was contributed by a public benefit for her relief. Of this she immediately lavished £200 on a single fashionable article of dress!

in the choice, but not in the number, of your pleasures.”*

We shall gather from the selection of our gratifications, whether they be innocent and lawful, what are those which require to be restrained, and where they may be indulged with safety. Desiring what is agreeable, is the real pursuit of pleasure sanctioned by a better name: and if we review the various modes employed to make us relish life, we shall discover that content is never to be found in the absolute denial of personal and mental gratifications. But how to concentrate all our natural and acquired propensities in content, is the most useful of all theory, and the best of all practice, from disseminating happiness around us in our own satisfaction. Negative and positive excesses are alike unprofitable—every thing is to be tempered by moderation: for “austere philosophy makes few wise men, too rigorous a government few good subjects, too harsh a religion few devout souls, and nothing is desirable that is not suitable to our nature.”

If moderate gratification of the senses, and enlarging the sphere of intellectual enjoyments, prove pernicious, it is from over indulgence: it is from transgressing the bounds of self-controul, and deriding the admonitions of prudence.

* *Deslandes Reflections*, p. 77, said of the father of Ninon D’Enclos.

The day has been when all liberal knowledge and ornamental learning was condemned in Britain; when sports and pastimes were banished, and the recreations of exhausted nature deemed the high road to perdition; when the innocent pleasures of life were held accursed as carnal sensualities, and spiritual comforts were administered in the howlings of frantic enthusiasts. Even now there are actually some individuals who hold it unlawful to partake of the ordinary amusements of their countrymen, who shun the social intercourse of the world, and scarcely admit of private friendships. Yet examining them more narrowly, they seem fuller of pretensions than practice; profuse of counsel to do good; sparing of charity for human weakness; abounding in precepts; full of egotistical enquiries about themselves; wrapped up in self-interests.—Forbidding visionaries!

Along with moderate personal indulgence, the rational objects of enjoyment are to be found in intellectual acquisitions, amusing occupations, contemplating museums of nature and the arts, resorting to public spectacles where vice is scourged and virtue applauded, together with temperate social intercourse, and the like; for not only do these assist in governing the mind, and in polishing the manners; but they promote cheerfulness and content, and tend to correct that ascetic disposition preventing us from being either useful or agreeable. None could foresee the consequences

of abridging the wonted sources of satisfaction ; and allowing the influence of a gloomy, morose, discontented, and dangerous spirit to prevail, which certainly would be substituted for the smiles of inoffensive gaiety.*

If the pursuit of pleasure has nothing evil in itself, let us recollect that it is only when curbed by moderation, and while the means of indulgence are innocent in themselves. In a temperate life, the pleasures surpass the pains ; and in an intemperate life, the pains surpass the pleasures in number and quality.† Excesses testify the absolute empire of the passions, that having abandoned self-command, human reason has no greater dominion over us, than force ineffectually exerted over the brute creation to restrain their appetites. The voluptuary breaks down the strongest barrier in the ardour of his pursuits ; and, like the profligate, he thinks only of himself, though at the expense of others. He leaves no room for the kind affections in his breast ; every movement is selfish : He glories in his contempt of virtue, and prides himself in sensual gratifications. But this is not the innocent pursuit of pleasure ; for nothing is innocent which can affect the tranquillity of others, or which affords a corrupt example.

* *Hutcheson*, Moral Philosophy, Book I. chap. vii. § 10 :
 “ That mind is always best disposed for the reception of all cheerfulness and pleasantry, where all is kind and easy.”

† *Plato de Legibus*, lib. v.

Under ordinary circumstances, the smoothest is the preferable course ; nor will the prudent render themselves fretful by spontaneous exposure to asperities. If we actually possess sensibilities as the gift of bountiful nature, it is not with the design of their lying eternally dormant, but for the purpose of being awakened at a suitable season by impressions. Though having to contend against them in compliance with later social ordinances, we are also warned by some kind of suffering, of having transgressed the proper bounds of sensual indulgence, and reason admonishes us to restrict ourselves in all things to mediocrity, as alone conducive to welfare. Rules are prescribed to the appetites by moral duties ; and the temperate are sparing in their pursuit of pleasure, from finding depravity in excess ; while they discover that habitual command of the passions only, can preserve both the intellectual and corporeal system at that medium which will the most effectually shun inconvenience.

§ 2. *Concord.*—By concord are mankind united in mutual love. It is the pleasure of friendship, the consolation of adversity, the encouragement to enterprise, and the softener of labour. It strengthens nations, rejoices families, and makes society flourish. Temperance, in restraining personal indulgence, is essential to all the stages of tranquillity ; but it is no less essential to curb all the propensities and passions, which might prove a disturbance to others. We must neither be too eager

to enforce the opinions which we have conceived of things, nor resist too obdurately those which are urged on us by our neighbours. The tranquillity of no one is to be invaded, on account of our idle or vicious gratification. We are not to give way to vehement anger, for trivial nor even for grave offences: we are not to wound the good with malignity, nor overpower the humble in our arrogance.

The passions are to be stilled in concord: Embracing while we are embraced, sustaining while sustained, we are pacified in its smile.

Universal amity, and reciprocal friendship, ought naturally to result from our mutual dependence on good offices and acts of kindness at the hands of each other. The less the support given by our fellow creatures, and the more solitary our condition, our conveniences are proportionally abridged; and the firmer we are knit together by social bonds and concord, the readier is the ministry of comfort. But, as if an anathema had been uttered against mankind, scarcely can two or three of our race associate in permanent and uninterrupted harmony. By a great and lamentable imperfection of our nature, we involve ourselves and the world in deadly contentions; and discord brings the best concerted projects for human felicity to ruin.* Even where common necessities should rivet us in friendship,

* *Sallust Bellum Jugurthinum*, cap. 6: *Nam concordia res parvæ crescunt maxumæ dilabuntur.*

unaccountable animosities are indulged : apathy for good, and pleasure in offence.

It is related by the historian of Peru, that Peter de Serrano, a Spaniard, was wrecked on a desolate island, where he remained several years in dreary solitude, unknown and forgot. When despairing of mortal succour, a man suddenly appeared before him, a stranger, helpless, and, like himself, in a state of misery. Neither could credit his senses: both were inspired by distrust and apprehension. But this was not the season for enmity; for the stranger proved to have sustained a similar disaster, wherein all his comrades had perished. Here then were two beings apart from all the world, who could entertain no hopes of escaping from the narrow theatre of their imprisonment, who could seek no consolation but in their own society, whose wants were to be best alleviated by co-operation. Both rejoiced—yet their friendship was of short duration—in a few days they ceased to speak to each other: nor were they reconciled, until the pressure of their joint necessities expelled the demon of discord.*

The delicacy of our susceptibilities admitting painful impressions, we are always exposed to disturbance, which the absence of self-controul permits to rankle in the breast. We become impatient, morose, and offensive, by habit. Yet has not every

* *Garcilasso de la Vega*, Royal Commentaries, Book I. chap. 3.

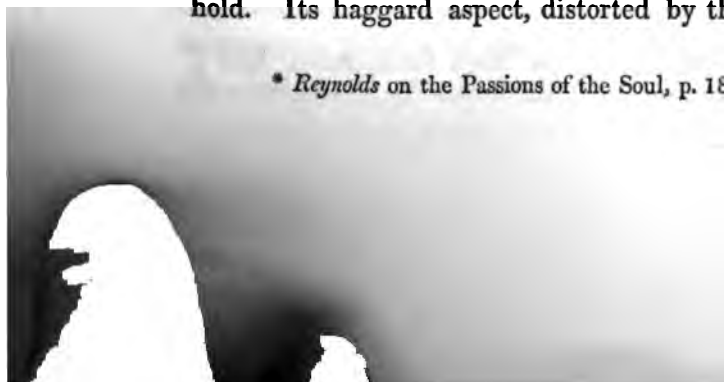
person, even the most placid, felt moments of irritation unaccountable to himself? Has he not allowed internal feelings to master him, and proved injurious merely because some one was found to bear invective? It is the less remarkable that we should be ready to disagree with others, if easily dissatisfied with ourselves: "when a man hath war within, no wonder if he have no peace without."* Morbid sensibilities will not suffer the patient to enjoy long repose; he resembles the sea, which tosses all cast on it, not because it is wronged, but because it is agitated.

We must invest ourselves with the watchfulness of self-controul as an antidote to the imperfections of our nature. We must be careful to preserve the calm of temperance against the words which follow displeasure, and the violence which follows words. Let the cloud be dispelled before it spreads dismay in the bursting storm.

Nevertheless, we are at the same time compelled to be prepared for incessant resistance against the insolent encroachments of indiscretion. We must present a steady front to mankind; for those who press upon us and deny our rights, would hasten, in our forbearance, to arrogate them to themselves.

The deep corrosions, the fatal ravages of discord, that bane of mortal pleasures, are frightful to behold. Its haggard aspect, distorted by the hoarse

* *Reynolds on the Passions of the Soul*, p. 187.



murmur of swelling passion, terrifies the soft harbingers of love from their tranquil abode, and the genial regions of happiness. But most horrid is the hopeless state of those who, fettered by domestic chains which it tears asunder, yet cannot escape its presence. In the morning of life we visit a youthful pair, animated by one common soul, whom tenderness has united in the bonds of purity. Cheerfulness, content, and joy, alone, are known to them, and they live for each other in the fulfilment of virtuous duties. The seeds of moral precept, sown in a happy soil, have fructified in excellence. Gazing on her infantile offspring, delight beams in the fond mother's expressive eyes as she offers it to the embrace of her gladdened partner, who traces in its lineaments the image ever present in his breast. Next are others welcomed to share the overflowings of their love. The children, nurtured as they grow, like pliant shoots, in the soft, and smooth, and placid feeling of the parents' hearts, become the genuine reproduction of themselves. This charming family rejoices our benevolent wishes. We have seen the rose blossom in fragrance,—we withdraw, in musing on the comforts of humble life; on the tranquillity which comes of industry, on affection fostering peace, or mutual solicitude lightening labour, and speeding the flight of time. The visit repeated after a few revolving years, occupied, perhaps, among vacant scenes of chilling ceremony or grandeur, the curling smoke no longer seeks the

clouds at even tide: no cheerful voice again invites the stranger's access within the cottage walls: weeds grow rank before the door; we come to listless solitude. "What!" say we, "have its inmates prematurely paid the debt of nature, because fortune's favours were too profusely lavished—because content had found an asylum in humility?" No—the inmates still are there—how changed! how fallen! Absorbed in thought and sullen silence, each, with averted looks, now seems full of care. Convulsive palpitations agitate their features, alternately deformed by frowns, or relaxing into fiery glances of bitter animosity; the playfulness of mirth has ceased to smile. Home offers no enjoyments to its wretched owners: often deserted, it seems home no longer. It is forsaken without pleasure: it is sought with regret. No common bond subsists for mutual welfare: private neglect of public good has allowed disorder to smother the richest luxuriance, and brought the ornaments of nature to decay. Wherefore is it so? why is not the ruddy rose yet blooming? wherefore has its fragrance faded? Harmony has fled, and hideous discord shakes her snaky head. Contention begot resentment, and anger has given birth to hate. Alienated from reverence, tokens of rebellious impatience are shewn by that once affectionate progeny, complacent and mild as their doating parents. Now beginning to think for themselves, before the mind is tempered by reason, vitiated by example, unrestrained by moderation, they are strengthened

by prejudice on the one hand, and rivetted by obduracy on the other. Disputes degenerate into rancour, forbearance is forsaken, and the flame fanned by raging passion, terminates in violence and uproar. Alas, how deplorable the change! Withdrawing from the melancholy scene, we are filled with sorrow and mortification at beholding so unlikely an invasion of the happiness of rural felicity, by the flight of fair concord.

Could we probe into the real source of such a calamity, we should find it exclusively in the dereliction of self-controul; and did we ask about its commencement, most probably we should be referred to some very trifling matter, to some gross or inexplicable absurdity. Many who find themselves at last involved in serious contentions, giving way to reciprocal invectives, or even venturing further, have forgot how or where it began. In vain do they search back for words, or try to trace the course of disputation. Its progress is lost, its fountain is hidden, but the vehemence of discord still remains to infuriate those who have erected themselves into opponents. Instead of allowing the angry passions the mastery, would it not be preferable that the first subject of debate were always conceded? Of what material consequence is it, whether green or blue be the more pleasing colour; whether one month of the year has been warmer than another; whether spring or autumn be the more agreeable season, if contesting it shall open the way to discord? If na-

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ture has framed our system so that the senses and perceptions do not admit identically the same impressions, and if different opinions thence originate in the mind, mutual concessions ought rather to remedy the imperfection, than the torch of furious controversy be inflamed by persisting that we alone are right, and all others wrong.

Our sentiments should be diffidently and moderately advanced, however confidently we feel their truth; and especially in such a way, that they shall persuasively operate conviction. In the same manner, should we listen attentively to the opinions offered to ourselves. If sustained on neither side by logical argument, by actual experiment, or by that authority received by both, they may be temperately overthrown. There is nothing congenial in truth and clamour. The more passionate we are in disputation, the less likelihood that our words shall have weight. We are entitled to oppose error, or even to combat just opinions, if they would be productive of inconvenience, by pleading that to listen would be wrong; and we may strengthen our plea by illustrations. In the worst ages of controversy, the disputants dealt as much in invective as in reasoning: they were loud in debate, rude in contradiction, pregnant with asperity. We cannot now peruse their compositions without disgust. But, descending to personalities in argument, is adverse in the laws of polished life: it demeans ourselves, and outrages deco-

rum, while casting ridicule on justice. Conviction is operated silently and secretly: truth is frightened away by violence; but falsehood cannot abide temperate discussion, which will at last gain the victory.

Were it not from aversion to deceit, far better would it be often to give seeming acquiescence to inconsistency, than to stir up wrath by rejecting it.

There are some who cannot hear the slightest assertion adverse to their own opinions, and especially if adverse to what they think is truth, without immediately enlisting in opposition. There are some of so contentious a nature, that they gladly contradict, or eagerly obtrude such topics as shall be surely met by contradiction. Their pleasure is not in concord.—Many subjects, and particularly those that cannot be quickly verified, or appear under different colours, would involve ages in their solution, and give employment to a thousand tongues. The wise will anxiously shun them: they are too well adapted for debate, the certain precursor of discord: allowing them to rest undisturbed, we may ourselves repose in harmony. Fertile fields of contention have been opened between persons unknown to each other, separated by the widest intervals: and implacable resentments have been generated between those who could not discourse in the same language, merely because their sentiments were

known to differ.* How absurd! - Cannot we brood over our own opinions without disturbing our neighbours? cannot we allow them the quiet and inoffensive enjoyment of their tenets, without maliciously invading their peace?

Many persons are quite incapable of beholding the same subject exactly under the same aspect as it is beheld by many others. The constitution of their organic and intellectual system opposes it. Evidence to one is not evidence to another. We cannot admit what we cannot believe; we cannot believe what is not conveyed by impressions to the mind. Are we to hate, to injure, and oppress those whose opinions do not suit our own? We have witnessed sentiments which had currency for ages, and enthralled reason, speedily overthrown, when the enlightened could courageously confute them, and establish truth.

As quiet is the most enviable possession, so are peace and amity the most desirable to mankind. But if it be true what Plato asserts, that in reality universal war is proclaimed by nature, and peace

* *Werenfels de Logomachiis Eruditorum*, cap. 7: "Who is ignorant of the enmities between different sects and religions; between orders and societies; between academies, or between persons engaged in different studies; of the aversion and emulation of collegians and pupils, and between those who derive pleasure from things ancient or modern? Who is ignorant of the enmities between those believed to decry each other's learning, or who reject and despise our opinion, together with those who offer a real or a nominal dissent? And who has ever attempted to enumerate them?"

is only nominal,* we can hope for external tranquillity by moderating the internal passions alone. If they be ready to blaze unbridled, and our resentments be always prepared to fall on the head of the nearest, merely because they are nearest, our lives cannot be otherwise than contentious. It is habit, however, that promotes their indulgence, and impunity which allows men to be vehement. Discipline will enable us to restrain ourselves, to bear much that is done to us, and to abhor the use of invective as an offensive weapon at immediate command.

How large is the vocabulary of reproach, how many the synonyms of vituperation in the language of the most polished European nations? Yet, to their disgrace, we are told of a foreign tribe of no celebrity in artificial refinement, among which there is "a total want of words of abuse in their language."† We are told it as a proof of the mildness of their manners, and the harmony in which they are united. It is possible, therefore, that placidity and forbearance, that the restraints of early education, can effect gentleness and complaisance: and although the Grecian sage, as later authors, has ascribed a state of warfare to nature, perhaps he discourses respecting larger communities only. Nature, as if disclosing to untutored mankind the exact limits suitable to permanent union, has not denied that only two may ever live in concord.

* *Plato de Legibus*, lib. i.

† *Golownin*, *Recollections of Japan*, p. 246, speaking of the Kurile Islanders.

But let us survey an enormous multitude of people collected together: whether a prominent object absorbs their notice, simple approximation in itself proves inconvenient, and exciting dissatisfaction, querulous murmurs arise. After some tumultuous throes, the unwieldy mass, unable to resolve into independent parts, begins to be inspired with an inclination for sporting in mischief. The greater the concourse, the more incapable are the individual members composing it of deliberation, and the more prepared for the access of passion. Their rational faculties are bewildered in the predominating confusion, and at length the whole, as if animated by one common soul, blindly rushes forward, armed with exasperation, ready for vengeance, against whatever obstacle shall be found, just as the heavy wave rolling before the winds breaks impetuously on the shore.

Something seems to promote irritability in the very enlargement conjoined with the compression of society; for however laudable the original purpose of association, displeasure is often too near at hand; and those who have met even to be entertained, sometimes seem willing to close their diversion in scenes of riot and devastation.*

* *Piozzi*, Observations in a Journey through France, Italy, and Germany, vol. i. p. 350: "Though night is the true season of Italian felicity, they place not their happiness in brutal frolics." Some other countries require patrols of horse or foot to keep tranquillity.

In ordinary life, we expect that every one shall accord with our inclinations ; but very few are found so complaisant towards each other, and so does discord follow : First it comes in family feuds, infringing domestic peace ; and last it closes in the war of nations. Private history is too much the theatre of contention ; public history chiefly the record of tumult and warfare. We are told of the ruler occupying a certain æra, the means he employed for his own aggrandizement, to extend his conquests and accumulate treasure. But a secondary view is taken of his plans for promoting the peaceful arts or domestic tranquillity, of his justice, his benevolence, and piety, as embellishing his reputation. His name is renowned because he was victorious ; because the sword, and fire, and famine, were enrolled in the train of war ; because death and desolation marked his progress, and barren regions or deserted cities shewed where the torch of discord had flamed.

If private dissensions be odious, those involving the public fate are terrible to be described. The safety, the honour, the comfort of ourselves, our families, and kindred, are put in peril, which only blood is to redeem : And why ? The discord of nations, like personal contention, originates in trivial beginnings, so trivial that the cause is forgot, and the profit so little in the end, that all the satisfaction commonly required or granted is the simple restitution of things to their pristine

state. But the waste of blood and treasure cannot be restored: the miseries and destruction of war are incurable, or they are consigned to oblivion along with the existence of those who have suffered. We hear of sieges, of storms, and of battles. Do we weep for the torments of the wounded, or the number of the slain? do we pity the destitution of the widow and the orphan? do we shudder at the shame and indignities which are heaped on the vanquished?—No! we are content to ask, was the day bravely contested, and where the victor rests his arms? how dear did the conquest cost him, or how many have fallen in the field?—We listen to prodigies of valour, admiring the love of glory, which inspirits the soldier's soul, or wondering at the strength of desperation, which faded only with the flight of life.

But how many horrid things could be told of war, where “even men who once were honest, humane and generous, become selfish, avaricious, fraudulent and cruel;”^{*} where the kind affections are corrupted, and the social virtues contemned; where parents cease to love their children, and children cease to love their parents; where famine makes the famished fierce? During the siege of Athens “many dreadful things happened, and this is related among the rest. A father and his son were sitting in the same room in the last despair, when a dead

^{*} *Labaume*, Narrative of the Campaign in Russia, p. 219. 235.

mouse happening to fall from the roof of the house, they both started up and fought for it.”*

Yet how many things still more shocking could be told of war, where the dread of pain or indignity overcoming the dread of death, leaves none but the victors to record that the vanquished have been.†

It is consolatory to reflect, however, that great as the miseries of war appear, perhaps they have abated with the progress of time: that the discord of modern nations seldom wears the same sanguinary aspect as exhibited in the features of ancient ages. Perhaps even that desirable day may come, when some great improvement may lead to easy conquest without effusion of oceans of human

* *Plutarch* in vita *Demetrii*.—*Deuteron*. ch. xxviii. ver. 56: “The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness, her eye shall be evil towards the husband of her bosom, and towards her son, and towards her daughter.”

† *Josephus*, *Bell. Judaic.* lib. iii. cap. 8; lib. vi. cap. 3; lib. vii. cap. 2. 3. 9.—*Livy*, lib. xxviii. cap. 2. 23.—*Sallust*, *Bell. Jugurth.* cap. 72.—*Justin*, lib. i. cap. 23; lib. xiii. cap. 6.—*Florus*, lib. ii. cap. 18.—*Valerius Maximus*, lib. vii. cap. 6.—*Tacitus*, *Histor.* lib. iii. cap. 25. 51.—*Diodorus*, lib. ii.—lib. xx. var. loc.—*Procopius* de *Bello Gothico*, lib. ii. cap. 20.—lib. iii. cap. 17.—*Beague*, *Campaigns 1548–9*, p. 92.—*Moryson*, *Ten Years Travel*, Part II. Book iii. chap. i. p. 271.—*Brachelius*, *Historiæ sui temporis*, p. 231.—*Musgrave*, *Memoirs of the Rebellions in Ireland*, *passim*.

blood, and when this afflicting scourge, now so terrific, shall soften throughout the world.

But the sources of private dissension certainly are enlarged: For how can they diminish where all mankind, treading on each other's heels, perpetually rear themselves in mutual opposition regarding a thousand matters heretofore unknown? True it is that we cannot now complain of those fierce and cruel conflicts which religion animated, and "made it piety to be irreconcilable." Yet do not let us absurdly credit that public animosities are indifferent to private friendship; that contention for worldly good is not always ready to sunder comrades; that the bread which should fill another's mouth, or rejoice his family, is wrested from him without inspiring hate. The very political constitution of Britain is calculated to produce hostility among her children: And too often, from the natural pravity of mankind, do we find more reciprocal malevolence indulged among the members of domestic society, and louder exultation at each other's distress, than is testified in respect to a common enemy.

Discord banishes every pleasure, and weakens every tie; but while it severs kindred, and roots out their dynasties, they flourish and become invulnerable in concord.*

* *Tacitus* in vita Agricolaë, § 12: Dum singuli pugnant universi vincuntur.

§ 3. *Self-Controul*.—If it has pleased dispensing nature so to frame the human system as to be the sport of internal tumult, she has at the same time bestowed a counteracting power, by which it is our duty to correct this imperfection if we would obtain a happy life. None of the propensities or appetites with which we are invested may be safely let loose in the social state; nor are there any which it is not beneficial to restrain. We abuse our passions in their exercise; and those very gifts designed by nature as the means of promoting pleasure, are indiscreetly converted to the instruments of punishment. Yet although the sources of good are never opened for the immediate purposes of evil, we cannot sufficiently discover the benefit of self-controul, until that voice which has hitherto been silent becomes clamorous, from the pains attending its dereliction.

Infinite advantages must always be derived from subjugation of the passions; and for a man to vanquish himself, is the greatest of all victories; but to be vanquished by himself, is disgraceful.*

One does not ask why the elementary tempest rages; he flies before it, and shelters himself from its violence. Beholding a furious despot, he trembles in his presence: and scarcely thinks his life his own, until he is pacified. Should not we tremble lest passion

* *Plato de Legibus*, lib. 1.

be the despot ruling us? Assuredly it is not a weaker tyrant.

But man, while undisturbed by internal agents, is in a placid state. Having then the sway, it is reason which should command the despot that would govern his actions, and thus prohibit evil. If otherwise, we come to ruin. We covet something: our inclinations are strong: unable to resist them, we rob or destroy. The probity of our neighbour is beyond temptation, but he is the object of

our dislike; we willingly credit the slanderer who calls him corruptible, and rejoice to think him vile. According to the authority with which we are invested over ourselves, we put restraint on passions; and if fortified in discipline, we feel it as if incumbent on us to render an account of all that we are about to do. No slave can be more miserable than the man who is led by the imperious mastery of his passions: no thralldom worse to bear than when they become his only guide; nay, they conduct him to remorse as his punishment, where safe from human penalties.

Two modern chiefs, not very eminent in the history of the world indeed, but armed with despotic powers, have personally illustrated these maxims in a homely and simple manner. The king of the interior of Ceylon, lately taken prisoner by the British, seemed astonished at the reproaches indignantly uttered against his repeated barbarities. "But," replied he, "the English governors have

one advantage over us kings of Candy—they have counsellors about them who never allow them to do any thing in a passion ; and that is the reason you have so few punishments : but, unfortunately for us, the offender is dead before our resentment has subsided.”* Men, who have the truth properly put before them, and especially if no longer enabled to pursue their wonted career, cannot avoid conviction of their error. By that time their ruling passions are quelled : they have only the effects to contemplate.—The other, a chief among the Southern Islanders, was wont to regret the violence of his temper as a penalty inflicted on him by the Divinity ; and he charged his principal attendants to hold him whenever he seemed about to yield to paroxysms of anger. They obeyed his injunctions ; and when it had subsided, he expressed himself grateful for their interference.† Further, it is said that the king of an island near Timor, “ being of a violent and cruel disposition in his youth, abdicated the government in favour of his brother, lest such a temper should lead him to be guilty of injustice.”‡

We have made no little progress in philosophy, when discovering our imperfections : we have ad-

* *Narrative of Events in Ceylon*, p. 32.

† *Mariner*, Account of the Natives of the Tonga Islands, vol. i. p. 426.

‡ *Arago*, Narrative of a Voyage round the World, p. 195.

vanced an important stage in resolving to correct them ; having accomplished our design, we are to be held proficient.

Men, who have been taught great jealousy of prerogative, require more than ordinary prudence to govern themselves: they should become habitually subservient to restraint, instead of being the slaves of passion. Louis XI. of France disgraced some of his officers, on learning that they had cautiously withheld him by force from leaping out of a window during a fit of insanity. Another despotic monarch felt the indignity so deep of having had profane hands laid on his august person, though in rescue from an infuriated animal of the chase, that he commanded his deliverer to be slain. But Saladin, the conqueror of the East, being struck on the face by a slipper aimed at some one from the hand of a Saracen, turned aside his head feigning not to observe the offender.

Habitual moderation will not only disdain avenging each petty injury, but hold provocation in contempt ; and where penalties are necessarily exacted, to prevent the repetition of transgressions, it will shew that they should be as mild as can be inflicted consistently with the public safety. As there is always greater honour in temperance than in passion, so there is greater glory in pardon than in punishment. One who entertained Augustus, furiously commanded a slave to be thrown into a fish pond

merely for breaking a glass.* But Claudius having invited a guest a second time, who had previously stolen a gold or silver cup, only directed that he of all the company should be served, on this occasion, with an earthen vessel.† The reproof corresponded to the meanness of the action: it could not be mistaken. To listen temperately to intemperate discourse, testifies genuine magnanimity; nor is wrath to be exhibited by him who is in the power of the offended. Euclides, the Lacædemonian, having said many insulting things to Artaxerxes, he simply ordered the captain of his guard to reply, "You may say what you please to the king, but the king would have you to know that he can not only say but do." So at another time, when an English ambassador uttered a loud complaint to Louis XIV. with greater vehemence than discretion, he was heard without interruption—and having concluded, the king, with equal moderation, answered, "Mr Ambassador, I have been always master in my own house: sometimes in that of others. Pray do not give me occasion to remember it."

Recompence should somewhat exceed desert, and punishment be somewhat inferior; for mankind require encouragement to virtue, while retributive

* *Seneca de Ira*, lib. iii. cap. 40.—*De Clementia*, cap. 18: Augustus interdicted the cruel sentence, bitterly reproaching its author, and ordering all the glass vessels in his house to be broken.

† *Tacitus, Historiæ*, lib. i. cap. 47.—*Plutarch in vita Galbæ*.

justice must be tempered by mercy. Foreigners, judging by the severity of our laws, might consider the British a nation of banditti. Each of nearly a thousand legislators may obtain a new law, where he usually takes care that, instead of the lowest, the highest possible penalty is denounced against offenders. How ought that legislation to be characterized, which condemned a culprit to lose his head, where losing his ear would be too severe a punishment? During the late reign a girl of sixteen was sentenced to be burnt, on whom a few bad halfpence had been found secreted. The nature of the British laws render them abortive, for one half of the nation refuse to consent to their execution; and were not the people renowned for humanity, the world would hold them for barbarians.

Public abuses abound in all countries, from neglecting to abrogate those ordinances which, suitable to another condition, or to an extreme case, cease to be beneficial; and from those patriotic or enlightened individuals, who know their operation, wanting the power of remedy. But we are scarcely to hold as an abuse that of which those who are supposed to be the actual sufferers do not complain.

Were our attention directed to the treatment of our inferiors, of those dependent on us for whom we are bound to provide, and whom we are entitled to admonish, we should find, perhaps, that obedience is exacted of many, who, if merit made pretension, might

have a better right to receive it. But if they be actually our inferiors, how can we expect that unerring accuracy of conduct, wherein so many above them fail? It is absurd to look for perfection under great disadvantages; therefore it is absurd to visit imperfections too censoriously. Capricious injunctions continually escape, against which our dependents feeling their duty in obedience, cannot presume to remonstrate. Our own indiscretions aggravate their faults: they become callous as we become imperious; for commands harshly given, at length cease to be complacently obeyed. Humanity forbids the private abuse of privileges, by contrasting them with the privations of the humble. Therefore allowing ourselves to be easily transported with passion, and contriving the punishment of those subservient to us for trifling misdemeanours, argues an unbecoming resentment, and the dereliction of self-controul.

A bulwark should guard the weak; the strongest defence should be reared for those who can least defend themselves: whence to oppress the humble, whom Providence will not abandon for their lowliness, is a great offence.*

We are not altogether independent of mankind in any station, by superiority in power, in rank, or in riches. These are the means of bringing forth numbers willingly offering themselves as depen-

* *Plato de Legibus*, lib. v.

dents ; but we are ourselves in real dependence on many more circumstances for the preservation of our comforts, as the slightest view of external annoyance, and of those who might be its authors, would show.

The duty of compliance should be felt by those subjected to our authority ; but commands are ever to be temperately enforced. If the obduracy and viciousness of some would laugh at the rod uplifted over them, and there be others on whom gentleness is lost, the majority are seldom wilful offenders, which ought to be an effectual reason for disarming wrath. Lenity is always laudable.

Marcus Antoninus made it a rule never to inflict punishment to the extent decreed by the laws, though sometimes remaining inexorable against atrocious crimes. Deterring men from vice by his moderation, and inviting them to virtue by his indulgence and liberality, he made the bad good, and the good excellent.*

Self-controul is not only a great virtue in itself, but from it many of the other virtues seem to derive their lustre ;† and its habitual exercise so moderates all the passions, that little exertion at length becomes requisite to manage them. The eyes of the ambitious and the covetous wander eagerly over the prospects of wealth and dominion ; the mind of the

* *Julius Capitolinus Marcus Antoninus Philosophus*, cap. 12, 24.

† *Smith*, Theory of Moral Sentiments, Part vi. Sect. 3.

voluptuary dwells complacently on images of sensuality; but the former are not rated so high by the lovers of domestic privacy, content with their fortune; and he who accustoms himself to the temperate participation of pleasure, finds no great difficulty in shunning that seductive snare wherein he might lose his happiness.

Xenocrates, say the ancients, was insensible to the charms of the beautiful Phryné, and despised the gifts of Alexander.* Scipio, in the flower of his life and flushed with conquest, restored a captive "virgin so beautiful, that every eye followed her footsteps:"† and not less generously did a modern Eastern Prince surrender a beautiful female, along with presents and others of her family falling into his hands by the fortune of war, on discovering that she had a husband.‡ The depravity of mankind has always reserved beauty as the special prize of the victor. On no virtue did Scipio declare he valued himself so much as the command of his passions; and the Eastern Prince is said to have never turned his eyes to right or left as he rode

* *Diogenes Laertius*, lib. iv. § 7, 8, 9. *Plutarch* in vita Alexandri.

† *Livy*, lib. xxvi. cap. 50.—Lib. xxx. cap. 12. 15.—*Dio Cassius*, *Fragmenta*, § 58.

‡ *Ferishta*, *History of the Dekkan*, vol. i. p. 356, speaking of *Ahmed*, who died in 1508.—*Senault*, perhaps, alluding to his own order, says, "we are bred in a school which forbids our looking a woman in the face," Part II. *Traité* 1. *Disc.* 3. p. 26.

through the streets, lest they might fall on another's wife. But a few unexpected incidents make a great noise in history.

Holding it the same whether any one entered another's house, or cast a covetous eye upon it, the sage concludes the contemplation of what is unsuitable an equal offence as going where he has no right to go.*

Self-controul being frequently opposed to the immediate voice of nature, a strong rein and steady discipline are requisite to keep us in subjection. Experiencing the evil of predominant passions, we resolve to be emancipated from their thralldom; to obey them no more. Yet so inconstant are we to our vows, that after yielding at the moment of temptation comes, we regret our weakness, and renew our resolution to be firmer on the next occasion.

But the merit and the utility of self-controul are not always on a parity. The merit is proportioned to the ardour of the propensity which should be overcome; the utility must be rated according to the inconvenience by which indulgence might have been followed.

It is chiefly in society that we shall feel the benefit of our solitary education; where we must impose self-restraint, lest self-indulgence reverberate against us; where our pursuit of pleasure must be moderate, our irritability restrained, offensive speech

* *Ælian Varie Historiæ*, lib. xiv. cap. 42: Of Xenocrates.

and deportment, sedulously avoided. Such a discipline has to be exercised over ourselves, as the longest life is seldom sufficient to bring to perfection.*

Nevertheless, self-controul being only designed to obviate evil, we shall not allow our nature to be steeled against all worldly incident. Undue encroachments are not to be admitted from excessive moderation; for sometimes it is less becoming to forgive the wicked, or to recoil from their presence, than to punish them sharply. We are never to endure the presumption of the arrogant. We are never patiently to behold the weak and unworthy usurping those rights which patriotic energies or honest industry have won, nor sit silent while our families, who merit honour, are neglected, and abandoned rivals strive to rob them of the renown which their virtues have purchased.

But throughout life we shall find the excellence of moderation in all things. Coupling it with benevolence, the better part of the social duties are discharged.

§ 4. *Pride*. One who is frequently the subject of his own commentary believes at length to have discovered certain perfections which, from slighter scrutiny, he has not seen in his neighbours; and which, with great attention, his neighbours have not found in him. But let him calmly and criti-

* *Smith*, Theory of Moral Sentiment, Part III. Ch. 3.

cally contemplate all his personal and intellectual embellishment, all his properties and prerogatives, nor forgetting the short enjoyment which he shall be permitted to hold of them, he will find very little encouragement for pride. To boast of personal ornament, which every transient hour is effacing, and which the slightest accident may impair, is folly. His knowledge is gained from the words of the learned: nothing is known to him but what was known before. He is indebted in few respects to his own merit, if what he owns is principally derived from fortune, or the blind partiality of friends; if his wealth has come of another's industry; if, claiming distinction, his honours have not been duly won. Courage, independence, benevolence, and charity, are not subjects for ostentation. Whereon shall his pretensions rest?

"A modest air," according to Malebranche, "denotes a man who esteems himself very little, and has a sufficient esteem for others."* Malebranche lived 150 years ago, when the diffidence of his countrymen admitted of practical observations on humility, and when the most amiable virtues were respected.—An epidemic of another kind is spreading.

The querulous, indeed, have always made it the subject of complaint, that mankind did not sufficiently humble themselves; and certainly the importance we are willing to assume is quite unrea-

* *Malebranche, Recherche de la Verité, liv. ii. chap. 5.*

sonable.* We are vain and arrogant. We would be the single objects of attraction ; the single agents in all things. But we are egregiously mistaken in ascribing qualities to ourselves, which the discriminating refuse ; and as it has fallen to the lot of some distinguished persons to have discharged important duties, to have made great discoveries, or performed great actions, which they modestly ascribed to good fortune and opportunity, so shall we find it prudent to abate our pretensions. Neither is it expedient to demand all the notice to which we are justly entitled, lest it may seem obtrusive. Plutarch happened to fulfil the whole functions of a public mission wherein a colleague was associated, but his father dissuaded him from rendering an account of it saying " I went, I said so, or did so," and recommended him to say " we went, we said so, or did so," that half the success might be ascribed to him whom the country had honoured with half of the confidence.

Men are very earnest to think well of themselves, and they are at the same time weak enough to imagine the world alike ready to offer testimonies of estimation, whereby they unconsciously lay open their vulnerable points ; nay, they are more piqued

* *Salgues des Erreurs et des Prejuges*, tom. i. p. 88 : " We are quite haughty in what regards our little grain of dust ; and we conceive that this imperceptible speck, projected into space, is the exclusive object of the divine affections, and the center of all operations."

by the denial of secondary qualities, accomplishments, or dexterity perhaps, in which their excellence would prove only secondary recommendations, than by refusing them merit for what is truly deserving praise. Dionysius condemned a poet to the quarries who would not applaud his verses. But in truth we are not very eager to think well of our neighbours; let us blush to confess so great a blemish in our nature; self-love forbids our admitting the competition of preferences with our own pretensions. Glaring imperfections are invisible to ourselves, though seeing them in others we account them unpardonable.* We are quick to censure, slow to approve, dealing out the same reproaches acrimoniously, which would be bitterly felt were not vanity always at hand: always ready to buoy us up and re-establish us in our good opinion. But it is **this** which blunts the weapon, and heals the wound. It redeems us from many mortifications.

Least of all, however, can vanity endure that rivalry which makes the nearest approaches to the perfection which we are desirous of calling exclusively ours, as if precluding others to compete for excellence. Yet, it still comes to help our searching eyes, and restore our self-satisfaction. Demetrius removed his warlike engines at the siege of Rhodes, to spare a picture which the inhabitants

* *Velleius Paterculus*, lib. ii. § 30: Adeo familiaré est hominibus omnia sibi ignoscere, nihil aliis remittere.

accounted the glory of their city. When Apelles first saw it, he could not speak—at length recovering himself, he cried “A master-piece of labour! a wonderful performance!—but it wants those graces which raise the fame of my paintings to the skies.”* Do not let us conceive that this was exclusively the vice of antiquity: if presumption be as old as merit, it is no less to be ascribed to ourselves than to our predecessors, as Balzac justly remarks: and if one of the later literati has supposed, that even two illustrious characters united were not comparable to him alone, he is outdone by Moulin, a French lawyer, who prefixed, by way of motto to some of his printed consultations, “I who yield to no one, and whom no one is able to teach.”†

The better we conceive ourselves, there is the less chance of our becoming good; for it is only from a certain sense of inferiority that exertions are instigated. The traveller who will render himself familiar with foreign regions, must be content to undergo the fatigue and privations inseparable from a painful route.

* *Aulus Gellius*, lib. xv. cap. 31: “Why would you destroy the painting,” said the Rhodians to Demetrius, “since you will obtain it entire should you conquer us?” *Plutarch in vita Demetrii*. *Pliny Historia Naturalis*, lib. xxxvi. cap. 36. § 10, 11. relates some entertaining anecdotes of the comparative merits of Protogenes the painter of this picture and Apelles.—*Ælian*, *Varie Historiæ*, lib. xii. cap. 41.

† *Balzac Entretiens*, p. 94: *Ego qui nemini cedo et qui a nemine doceri possum.*

But it is also possible to gain reputation from the inferiority of others, more than by the magnitude of our works. The times may admit celebrity even from inferior qualities.

Notwithstanding all this, vanity may be of some little use, which never can come of arrogance. It prompts us to obtain the same properties we esteem in others; and if actually succeeding, it would be unnatural to condemn ourselves. But vaunting of accidents as qualities, such as having first drawn breath in a certain country, or having descended from certain great personages, or of professing certain tenets, as if wanting any intrinsic worth of our own, is a puerile weakness.

We may rejoice that our happier lot has removed us from the intolerable oppression of aristocratical and ecclesiastical arrogance, which pressed so heavily on our ancestors; when the greater barons, amidst their dependents, affected the powers of petty potentates, levying forces, harbouring felons, executing summary justice on their vassals,—that is, maiming or strangling them with scarcely any formality of trial; and terrifying the good and pacific by their excesses. But still more formidable engines were in clerical hands, which, without drawing blood, could subdue the boldest, rendering them outcasts on earth, by excommunication. Superstition was employed to seize on men's conscience; and frightening them into acquiescence, the clergy held that as the means of obtaining what satisfied ambition or a

sensual life. Sometimes the holy Pontiffs were as active in stirring up rebellion as the most turbulent barons could desire; and if they might absolve subjects from their allegiance, or declare the throne vacant, it is consistent to believe that the lawful occupier of it had reason to fear. Pope Paul IV. could receive no foreign ambassadors without displaying his arrogance; he affected superiority over all princes; he said, none of them should be familiar with him, or be his companion; and that he could dispose of crowns, being the successor of him who deposed kings and emperors.*

Arrogance indeed, like pride, is equally the folly of modern as of ancient times; but if we be not better acquainted with it, our own arrogance is of a different kind. Overweening vanity and self-conceit makes us consequential. "We would be called most celebrated, while scarcely known without the walls of our native town: most magnificent where our circumstances are very circumscribed, and most excellent or most learned with little pretension to either virtue or knowledge."† Emulation excites a passionate desire for the repute of cleverness. Our mechanical education seems to generate incessant attempts at displaying an imaginary fertility of ideas in smart observations, though

* *Sarpi Istoria del Concilio Tridentino*, lib. v. cap. 17. ad an. 1555.

† *Menckenius de Charlataneria Eruditorum*, p. 29.

our presumption does no more than to mistake bluntness for poignancy, and entrap us into the dullest exhibitions of abortive wit.

The modest, the amiable, the honest, and sincere, never will indulge in that offensive pretension so expressively indicating the manners of the froth or of the refuse of society. They are disgusted with those who would have a hand in every dealing to enhance their ideal consequence, or to hear a man talk loud on purpose to command attention, or imposing his words in a dogmatic tone, who swaggers in the street as if he alone were entitled to occupy it, who plainly entertains such a good opinion of himself that even the most significant hints of disapprobation cannot put him out of countenance.

Full of pretension, we arrogate every thing reputed estimable, trusting that the ignorance or politeness of the world shall pardon our presumption : We affect to lead while hardly qualified to follow : we would start into notice in the clothing of dignity, as if native meanness and imperfection, requiring many upright years, and at least some generations to purify, could be disguised by ostentation.

We seem to forget that there is no station whatever precluding its occupier from the reputable discharge of its duties ; and in our anxiety to quit our own for one unfitted to the qualifications we possess, the flimsy veil of foreign ornament is raised to betray the infirmity which it was designed to conceal.

The wilful departure from dignity is no less in-

decorous than proud pretensions; for high or low, our station is to be suitably maintained; and the people have always beheld their governors with impatience when undervaluing themselves. Not to know what is becoming, is the worst of all ignorance.

The late Queen of France, the daughter of Maria Theresa, a heroine whose fortitude had preserved the German empire, established a private theatre at her court. For a sovereign, whose dignity should have been sustained by inspiring love and veneration of her rank and her virtues, to offer herself there, though even on a pantomimic throne, was offensive to decorum; but she descended to perform the character of servants, to receive orders, and obey them. Maria Theresa having desired her picture, she sent one in the costume of an actress. The Empress returned it saying, "Daughter, there must have been some mistake. Instead of the Queen of France, whose portrait would have given me delight, the picture I have received only shews the dress and the ornaments of an opera-dancer." But if the Queen forgot her station, no less so did her arrogant subjects in a very short time after; and the mean exulted in insulting the virtues of the great. A loud clamour arose among their representatives, when a deputation returning from an audience of the King, complained that both leaves of the folding-door of the presence chamber had not been opened to receive them! Democratic is equally

intolerable as aristocratic arrogance; the very semblance of prosperity then seems to have raised the proud above themselves.* Four standards won from the Piedmontese were presented, along with a brief address, by an aid-de-camp of the victorious general to the national representatives. "Only give us an order," said the impudent orator, "and all the crowns of the South shall be brought to your bar."†

Whether the accident of birth has conferred a certain station, whether fortune or opportunity has led to its appropriate selection, our conduct should correspond with its duties. We may aspire somewhat above its circumstances, for mankind are entitled to improve their condition; but descending from it to mean occupations is odious.‡

That respect which is due to dignity and rectitude, is forfeited by deviations from either, or by participation in what should have been avoided as indecorous. We are less to consider our inclinations, than whether they may be consistently gratified. Theophilus, while ruling the Eastern empire, commanded Greek fire to be cast into a vessel which he saw entering the port of Constantinople, on

* Proceedings of the National Assembly, 6, 7. Feb. 1792.

† *Moore*, Journal, vol. ii. p. 463.

‡ *Reynolds* on the Passions, p. 308: "Intrusion and occupation of other men's offices is a ground of shame, especially if they be such as wherein we descend below the dignity of our places or professions; as when men of liberal condition apply themselves unto the business of sordid persons; for every man is entrusted with the dignity of his place."

learning that the cargo belonged to the Empress. "Because God has appointed me to be an Emperor," said he to her, "would you convert me to a trader?" Know, that traffic is the province of private persons, that they may gain wherewithal to live: but if, besides enjoying the wealth of the empire, we intercepted the profits of commerce, how could our inferiors obtain their subsistence?* The great interfering with the vocations of the humble, depart from the sphere of their greatness. What are the true appurtenances of dignity, but magnanimous sentiments embellished by pomp and splendour; sometimes the internal character is denoted by external tokens. Louis XI. of France received ambassadors in a coarse cloak, an old bonnet, and seated in a chair with a whelp on his knees. Juan, King of Castile, in 1434, received the French ambassador sitting on a magnificent throne with a tame lion couched at his feet.

Perhaps it is not those in the highest station, but they who occupy a lower sphere, that endanger their reputation most by derogating from the duties which their rank has imposed on them.

If virtue should be encouraged by rewarding merit, personal distinctions must be purchased by conduct, not procured by wealth, nor obtained by favour. Modern arrogance, knowing nothing but pretension,

* *Zonaras Annales*, lib. xv. cap. 25. The reign of Theophilus began A. D. 842.

has ceased to rest its claim on real desert, and hence have distinctions been brought into disrepute, for pretension cannot altogether hide deficiencies. The celebrated Bacon observes, to the honour of his illustrious mistress, that "when any great officer, ecclesiastical or civil, was to be made, the queen would enquire after the piety, learning, and integrity of the man; and when she was satisfied in these qualifications, she would then consider of his personage; and upon such an occasion she pleased once to say to me,—‘Bacon, how can the magistrate maintain his authority when the man is despised?’”* What are now held qualifications for filling the magistracy in Britain, where much of the judicial system is actually in no small hazard of falling into contempt? The president Henault remarks, "that honours and recompense never become more common than where merit is rare." And another, describing a period when his country did not flourish, says, "the number of knights of different orders created was so great, that it appeared scandalous to the multitude."† Perhaps Henault should have said, that, amidst the profusion of recompense, the meritorious have not their share.‡ Our contemporaries know

* *Bacon Apophthegms.*

† *Richelieu Memoires*, tom. iv. p. 32.

‡ *Henault Abregé Chronologique*, tom. i. p. 514. *Meiners*, a German author, seems to consider the elevation of fifteen families in a century to be Peers of France as a profusion of dignities, vol. iv. p. 124.—A single year in Britain is more prolific.

ourselves, and some of them recollect our progenitors : we cannot prevent them from discovering when we would delude the world with our false pedigree and pretended qualifications ; and that artificial honours, without desert, are often the reward of servility. Though lower talents, assisted by consummate assurance, may sometimes enable the presumptuous to rise on their vain ambition, and from exacting a kind of fraudulent homage, carry the admiration of the multitude for the moment, they never can enjoy the permanent esteem of the good or the wise, for that must be reserved for virtues truly entitled to it.*

Modesty is an excellent quality, for, teaching us diffidence of our other qualities, it is the means of our desire to become better : it is to merit what shade is to a picture, giving strength and relief to the figures : and certainly he must be deficient in wisdom, " who doth not fear many eyes."† Confidence screens our imperfections from ourselves : it excludes that internal sense of deficiency, and represses that external investigation which would bear conviction, and bring it to light. Believing

* *D'Uhlanski*, *Travels in Poland*, p. 110, speaking of Vienna, " In other countries, the rage for uniforms and orders is universal : every one scrambles for them, to make a show of the bauble. Here it is quite the reverse : merit is clad in the habit of modesty."

† *Reynolds* on the *Passions*, p. 302.—*La Bruyere*, tom. i. p. 144.

ourselves all perfection without any criterion of comparison, that there is no room for acquisition or improvement, we shall cease to advance though very far behind. But if scrupulous in arrogating qualities, if feeling that there are still some most desirable which we do not enjoy, we have an evident stimulus to exertion; and whether our endeavours shall be crowned with success, it is impossible to remain stationary. Public applause, or undue recompense, both very often indiscriminately bestowed, must prove infinitely more pernicious to those whose assurance cannot admit the possibility of their defects, than when lighting on the modest, who do not ascribe the height of their fortune to the extent of their merits. If people think us somewhat better than ordinary, we should be distrustful of our pretensions:* if they think us somewhat worse than ordinary, we should have the greater anxiety to obtain esteem.

Inferiority to our neighbours who have had greater advantages, is no discredit, especially if we resolve to equal them by diligence. Time and opportunity are not alike to all men: we are only bound to make the most of our circumstances. Attempting to have it believed that qualities to which we are stranger belong to us, is an unworthy stratagem, capable it may be of a temporary deception on the undiscerning, but at the expense of our own veracity

* *Epictetus* Enchiridion, § 18.

and of their judgment. All our arrogated merit, even if considerable, a little self-scrutiny will discover to be greatly surpassed by the desert of many others.*

That kind of modesty which allows the properties of mankind to be gradually drawn forth, while still leaving some behind, will at length eclipse the arrogance of those who petulantly undervalue others by the estimate they put on themselves.

As excellent fruits sometimes denote an excellent soil, so have a few—not many—had the good sense to reject what, from a rare and ingenuous modesty, they were conscious did not justly belong to them, though incorporated with adulation sufficient to corrupt the texture of any ordinary mind. One of the Roman Emperors, on his accession to the purple, refused the name of Great. “Why should it be bestowed on me?” he demanded of the senate: “what have I yet achieved that is great? Alexander obtained it from his brilliant actions: Pompey, after splendid victories.”† Some have likewise refused panegyrics, or have cast down the statues erected by the servile as if to honour them.‡

We eagerly grasp at the slightest distinctions. Our modesty is seldom put to the blush from arro-

* *Roche foucault* M. 504. “Composed self-sufficiency generally turns to impertinence.”

† *Ælius Lampridius*, *Alexander Severus*, § 6. 11.

‡ *Sextus Aurelius Victor de Viris Illustribus*, cap. 44.

gating ideal qualities, which, even if existing, would often render us ridiculous.

§ 5. *Servility*.—But neither virtue nor honour can come of presumption, pride, and arrogance. A surer guide to rectitude, and better claims to praise, are founded on a modest consciousness of human imperfections. Nevertheless, how willing are we to obtain eminence, how impatient of its denial, how much do we yield for the sake of a little distinction! Those who seemingly shrink abashed from reverence, who declare they are humble and distrustful of themselves, are too easily reconciled to testimonies of respect or confidence; and although internal modesty has made them sincere, custom, rendering it grateful, encourages pestilential tribes of the servile.

No avenue of the heart is so open as that for flattery, which, stealing on its energies like a subtle narcotic, lays the guards asleep, and expels the generous affections.

The great are the patterns of the world: and the smiles of the great, testifying that adulation is far from offensive, create an host of parasites; for nature has made men selfish. How lowly do we cringe to those who have wealth and honours at their disposal; how servile and obsequient is our approach; how meanly do we solicit their favour; and how complacently is their arrogance taken, amidst our fawning, merely to keep their countenance! It is despicable—it is degrading. Necessity may compel the needy to do what they

disapprove, but men enabled to preserve their independence are thus rendered more than contemptible. Why should we select the great for our discourse? Those are great in our eyes who can be useful to us—we stem our pride to profit our avarice,—we worship them.—Edward III. of England, a Prince as proud as any of his progenitors, or as any successor who has filled the British throne, descended to court a Flemish brewer with the utmost assiduity, because he found him useful. The papal Nuncio, and the grand Almoner of France, each complacently carried a slipper to Madame de Barry the king's mistress; and the name of Barjac, the valet of Cardinal Fleury, with whom a servile nobleman begged the honour of being permitted to dine, cannot be easily forgot.*

Therefore it is not the minister alone that humbles himself before his master, nor the humble who stoop to the minister. But if the exalted forget their station, and the honourable quit the credit of their place, is it surprising if the grovelling abound? Is it surprising if there be “flattery which praiseth, imitateth, creepeth, changeth, transformeth itself to all shapes to get a living, and like crows pulleth out men's eyes with praises, that it may more securely make a prey of them?”†

* *Private Life of Louis XV.* vol. iv. p. 272. *Richelieu Memoires*, tom. iv. Part. ii. p. 49, 54. Fleury was then Prime Minister.

† *Reynolds on the Passions*, p. 306.

The pride of independence is an honest pride. Servility, whatever be their nominal character, belongs only to the mean: having once confessed it, they shall vainly hope to recover that place which they have so unworthily abandoned.

Historians relate, that Prusias threw aside the insignia of royalty, and went to meet the Roman ambassadors with his head shaven, adopting the manner and garb of a freedman, and calling himself such to the Roman people. When he left his own kingdom, and visited Rome, he prostrated himself on the threshold of the senate-house, and made a speech to the senate in terms corresponding to his deportment, "wherein he proceeded such lengths," says Diodorus, "as it is disgraceful for letters to record."*

Who would not be the first to follow, were the knee of reverence only bent to the wise, the benevolent, to the brave or virtuous guardian of public liberty? But who will crouch in concert with the slavish, glad to be servile for the sake of selfishness? We are not to humble ourselves in admiration of men, merely because we can profit by them: we are neither to worship rank, nor power, nor riches, so often bestowed by fortune's caprice, or as the reward of vicious industry. Though holding nothing of our own but conscious integrity, we can still preserve our independence.

* *Diodorus Siculus*, Excerpta, Legationes, tom. ii. p. 625.
Livy, lib. xlv. cap. 44. *Dio Cassius*, Fragments, § 162.

Yet, from the pernicious operation of that prejudice which, in another shape, begets aversion, so the understanding clouded by exaggerated partiality, or the false admiration of meaner qualities. Sympathies and antipathies, prepossession and dislike, take their origin in sources which no human ingenuity has been hitherto able to fathom: but ripening into prejudice, they become so deeply rooted as to confirm the ignorant in error. We are enamoured of people, of scenes, and subjects; we defend their very imperfections, and impatiently bear their comparison with those indisputably preferable. We become prejudiced in favour of some things by our familiarity with them, and are loud in praise of others from not being sufficiently known to us. Certain persons are inflated with self-love, while some are humbled by self-unworthiness. But prejudice is always tending to entice the senses, and to confound the understanding: it can even blind us regarding the truth, where we desire elucidation. "Thus," says Malebranche, "the impressions of study sink so deep on the brain as to efface the impression of things very different. There is one, for example, who has written several treatises on the cross; and this has made him see crosses in every thing. Father Morin justly rallied him regarding a cross which he thought to have found on a medal, though quite another figure."* But

* *Malebranche Recherche de la Verité*, lib. ii. cap. 2. 4. § 1.

"In like manner did Gilbert and others, from their study or

this kind of prejudice belongs to an earlier age than that of either Malebranche or Morin; for Justin Martyr, who flourished in the first or second century of the Christian æra, seems to have believed all earthly matters regulated by the form of the cross,—from Moses stretching out his arms in the form of a cross to invoke victory, to the sail of a ship crossing its mast, the figure of implements of husbandry; and he even found certain parts of the human frame resembling a cross.* Obvious facts could not be of so difficult discovery, were it not from identifying objects with ourselves, until the visions of imagination are actually mistaken for substantial forms.

It is exceedingly inconsistent to follow the influence of our inclinations, only because agreeable, without appealing to the correctives of reason. Many pursuits, sufficiently interesting and rational in moderate exercise, have thus fallen under the lash of ridicule, by becoming absurd from excessive admiration. We are misled by our enthusiasm. No better example is afforded than in the collection of rarities, things on which, by a strange perversion of judgment, we put an extravagant value, while utterly useless. So are our cabinets

admiration of the magnet, refer many imaginary properties to magnetism, which are void of the most distant relation to it."

* *Justin Martyr* Apologia Prima, p. 32. Dialogi, Part ii. p. 336. 418. This author was by no means ignorant of the better philosophy of the ancients.

adorned by splinters of ancient pottery and the early daubing of painters, who afterwards excelled in their art; or we rate the leaves of scarce editions of indifferent works far above their weight in gold. To complete a series, or possess a specimen, we are content with the worst. The present prejudice for ancient imperfections, if it lasts, may yet crown the hopes of our own celebrity in future ages, though nobody at present gives ear to our pretensions. An Englishman, who had a predilection for antiquities, lately died on his travels in Greece. His surviving friends, still more prejudiced in favour of ancient lore, have inscribed his tomb-stone with an illegible encomium, after the fashion of ages of ignorance, in sentences wanting points, and words undivided from each other.* How servile is imitation!—The author, however, knew a very worthy person, reputed a man of taste, who had an old tooth enchased in the precious metals, and rendered it his inseparable companion, in the belief that it had been found among the decaying bones of some of his progenitors deceasing 500 years ago.† Extra-

* *Laurent*, Classical Tour in Greece, Turkey, and Italy, p. 91: "It is indeed astonishing that men should be willing to sacrifice to the mania of imitating the very errors of the ancients, the striking effect which so very beautiful an epitaph would produce on every reader were it legible."

† *Piozzi*, Travels, vol. ii. p. 154: "No one has a right to ridicule the love of what once belonged to a favourite character," who ever desired to possess the relic of a deceased friend. An Englishman had got possession of a tooth of *Scipio Aemili-*

ordinary admiration is ascribed to ignorance or weakness; and assuredly those testifying it plainly shew, that they have either seen nothing better, or being unable to appreciate qualities, they merely follow example. We are as prone to praise what is praised, as to praise what is laudable.

We go to the theatre: an insipid dialogue is esteemed highly dramatic; mimicry is genius; screaming is music. They are crowned with bursts of applause. Corrupt taste is now in its zenith: replete with prejudice and imperfection, it is incapable of distinguishing error. When a very eminent actress, not long in retirement, originally came on the stage, one of the audience, in the extravagance of admiration, extolled her voice as actually resembling that of a man. "It is the first time," said another eminent actress standing beside him, "that ever I heard a masculine voice called a feminine quality." Enthusiasm carries people quite beyond themselves. The author remembers having once had occasion to see a whole city in an ecstasy of this kind, he considered the inhabitants as very ridiculous, and rejoiced heartily when they came back to their wonted sedateness as their distemper abated. An old writer, willing to make the most of all female qualities, with just discrimination remarks, that "the voice in women

lianus before its identity was ascertained, on discovering his tomb in Rome.

being much more gentle, tender, and delicate than in men, declares, that in the modesty, gentleness, and sweetness of affection, they greatly surpass them.”*

Human properties are for the most part infinitely overrated, especially if they be of an intellectual description, as can easily be accounted for from prevalent ignorance. Excessive admiration almost always betrays deficiency, particularly if from a sudden impulse; and we are never more liable to be blinded by prejudice, than by the previous bent of our inclinations. From an absolute infatuation, we esteem things good or bad exactly according to the satisfaction we reap from them, or the displeasure they excite. Here, too, we frame a relation between them and ourselves, though none be in subsistence, we hate a religion, or love a country; all things are agreeable when construed by prepossessions. It would have been a fine thing to have heard the discovery of some precious work of Sir Isaac Newton announced amidst the acclamations of the British senate: it would have shown a capacity to estimate matters of intrinsic value.

How can we judge justly of human merits while under the sway of prejudice? how can we pretend to determine what is right or what is wrong with a dark veil hung before our understanding?

* *Austin Hæc Homo*, wherein the excellency of the creation of woman is described, p. 126.

The servile worship men. They seem to consider them gods, as Lucan who of old implored Nero, when he should have reached heaven, to take such a place that the equipoise of the universe might not be disturbed by his greatness.* But the learned philosopher Plato warns us to be extremely cautious of erroneous praise or blame.† Unjust panegyrics, unmerited celebrity lavishing false eulogy, are reasonable grounds for distrusting sincerity and judgment. They are equally calculated to mislead as the calumnious denial of desert. Men are distinguished by their qualities; but indiscriminate praise, by confounding the excellent with the multitude, impairs the effect of that pattern which the multitude should be invited to observe.

Harmony is not more pleasing to the ear, indeed, than flattery to those delighting in commendation: nay, of all things offered, praise is that at which we are the least ready to take offence. It seems to tame our passions, to content us with ourselves, and to sooth us into complacency. Who is it that discovers nature to have been niggardly to the person, or parsimonious to the mind? Those enjoying the most slender distribution of her gifts, still find something to admire in themselves. Mankind who have not done well, shew no displeasure if their

* *Lucan Pharsalia*, lib. i. ver. 53.

———*Librati pondera cœli*
Orbe tene medio.

† *Plato*, *Minos*.

deeds be mistaken ; they who have done well, seldom complain if we think they have done better. All this opens the door to the flatterer, and encourages servility.

The most satisfactory social intercourse is among persons nearly on a parity in all things ; but we are fond of association with the great, that is, with those who are great in our eyes, though, when their imaginary greatness disappears, we sometimes become heartily ashamed of our servility.* Having allowed ourselves to be deluded into the belief of qualities where there are none, we hasten to retract our error. In the blind admiration of prejudices, busts and statues have been erected in our own æra to the wicked ; but the light of truth bursting on their enormities, they were cast down with equal precipitation as had decreed them a place. A vehement propensity for consecrating monuments to the memory of those of uncertain history, or even of equivocal qualities, now seems misleading the public.

Our weakness is so remarkable, that if the servile prudently avoid the humble, they may be safe in singing praise. A certain queen is said to have rewarded a poet liberally for celebrating her golden tresses, though she had not a hair on her head.

* *D'Argens Memoires*, p. 86: "Intercourse with the great resembles sin: at first agreeable, but as the pleasure decays disturbing our repose."

During the late consulate in France, an author dedicated his work to Thunder and the First Consul, as if the latter had been alike awful;* but the monks of a convent in Provence are said to have gone farther even than Lucan; for they proposed a dedication to Louis XIV. drawing such a comparison between him and the Deity, as clearly evinced their opinion that the superiority was on his side. Other extraordinary instances of servility border on impiety, to the shame and discredit of mankind; and in this Western hemisphere, it sometimes seems as if we were about to rival the Easterns, who call their king the shadow of God, or the son of Heaven.†

But the servile are often disappointed: they cannot conceal that it is themselves whom they wish to benefit by another's praise.‡ The celebrated minister Colbert deprived Menage of a pension, for composing a genealogy, whereby his extraction was traced to the ancient kings of Scotland; "a

* *Lequinio Voyage dans le Jura*, Paris, 1801.

† Can the following specimen of a letter to the Emperor be credited?—"Sire, you are my only Sovereign; but I adore your Majesty as my God. I am only your Majesty's subject, but I worship, I admire, I extol your Majesty as my creator, as the creator of universal happiness, of universal liberty, as the faithful representative upon earth of that Supreme Being ruling the heavens," etc. Signed GARY, Tribune, Paris, 1804.

‡ *Tacitus de Dedicacionibus Librorum*, § 26: "Fata dedicationum tristiora potius quam leta sunt."

good example to those who wish to give their patrons too high an elevation.”*

Thus there are some persons whose dignified mind disdains flattery, who refuse that the world shall be deluded by falsehood incorporated with their name. Conscious of having truly merited the palm of glory, they desire that the only record of their fame shall be the deeds whereby it has been won. Aristobulus having composed a narrative of the victory of Alexander over Poris, forgetful of veracity and full of adulation, read part of it to the hero himself on the banks of the Hydaspes. Snatching the book from his hands, he hastily exclaimed, “Aristobulus, could you not find any truths which rendered me worthy of commendation?”—and threw it into the river. More modest still, the Emperor Pescennius Niger said to some one proposing a panegyric on him, “Write the praise of Marius or Hannibal, or say what has been the life of some excellent general now deceased, that we may imitate his actions. But praise of the living, especially of monarchs, is derision.”†

The Poet Laureat would be the least honest among courtiers, did he not varnish the truth; for there are no perfect men. The weak are the

* *Vie de Jean Baptiste Colbert*, p. 308, 309. It is said, nevertheless, that two sons of a family in that country of the same name, were sent to France by every generation, who were regularly advanced in the ecclesiastical and military service.

† *Ælius Spartianus Pescennius Niger*, § vi.

most open to flattery ; vanity is fed on adulation : but to celebrate those for what they never did, is professing falsehood. Yet delicate testimonies are acceptable to men who are not weak, and whose reputation embellishes the name of their country. Modesty alone can refuse them.

On the other hand, the magnanimous spirit of some will not descend to solicit favour, nor accept as an obligation what they hold to be their right. When the widow of a soldier, who had died on the scaffold protesting his innocence, implored the clemency of Maurice, Prince of Orange, for her son, condemned on account of a conspiracy, to avenge him ; “ Madam,” said he, “ it seems very extraordinary to me, that you did not that for your husband which you now do for your son.” “ Prince,” she indignantly replied, “ I asked no pardon for my husband, because he was innocent ; I ask it for my son, because he is guilty.”

§ 6. *Justice*.—Falsehood is the work of art ; for truth in itself is nature. The calculation of numbers is infallible, matter is divisible into infinite aliquot parts of equal quantity. If designing to cut a thread asunder, it is not difficult to render each of the halves alike : if dividing a number into two even portions, we cannot assign a greater to the left than to the right. The simple exercise of reason is a sufficient guide : failing to abide by reason, the halves and the numbers become unequal.

Of all the virtues which we have under the most absolute controul, and from which there is the least temptation to deviate, is justice. Free from every propensity and appetite, stranger to the whole train of passions, this pure quality of the heart is subservient neither to disturbing nature, nor the interference of obligation. Always at command, it cannot be opposed by any personal interests brought into competition with our inclinations; nor has it ever to contend with that selfishness which may impair the testimonies of benevolence, and sometimes induce the dereliction of other social duties. The path is ever wide to justice: its external exercise proves the merit of human conduct, and the excellent constitution of the internal frame;* and if the definition of many, or of all the other virtues, be vague and indistinct, justice is that rule of morality which is precise and accurate, and cannot be mistaken.†

Why then are mankind unjust? How can strict impartiality be more difficult than to cut a thread in twain, or divide an even number into two equal parts?

But it is not the public distribution of justice, where the scales, along with a solemn responsibility, are committed to the hands of the judge, that is here contemplated, so much as those reciprocal deal-

* *Aristotle* *Ethici*, lib. ii. § 2.

† *Smith*, *Theory of Moral Sentiment*, Part vii. Sect. 4.

ings between men, whose failure in truth, or infraction of confidence, disturbs the social compact. The public dispenser has an easy duty to perform: the part of private individuals would be alike easy, could they preserve their fortitude against the influence of selfishness, when opposing themselves to their neighbours; for it is this which chiefly renders men unjust. Is it not evident that, acting as arbiters for ourselves, we still remain impartial by removal of the false impressions urging that things belong to us which are actually not our own? Assuming that they are our own, we awaken self-interest to cope with integrity, and are led to injustice by its sway. Resisting the temptation is no virtue, nor merits any praise; yet it seems to cost an effort to be just. But we are always judging in our own cause: the whole tenor of life consists in perpetual claims. Though satisfied with the goods of the world, we would yet have something more allotted in real honour and glory, or in fictitious renown; and, as long and undisputed possession is construed into the erroneous belief of property, so do we refuse their resignation, though it be clearly established they are none of our rights. In resolving the mutual pretensions of strangers, no such conflict can ensue: the judge has only to appeal to truth, and obey the dictates of reason in his fiat.

The whole intercourse of mankind is conducted in the tacit confidence of integrity: all human transactions proceed on the belief of receiving justice.

Whatever is the prevalent difference throughout the globe regarding the due interpretation of other virtues, the exercise of piety or the duty of filial veneration, the obligations of friendship or the practice of charity, the administration of justice is universally held to be imperative. So has it been expressly designed the minister of Heaven, the rightful sovereign of the world : and the moment we remove this grand pillar sustaining the fabric of society, it must crumble to dust.*

It is only by permitting ingress of the evil passions, or by yielding in weakness, that justice can be perverted; for so long as retaining self-command, and keeping our faculties and independence entire, we cannot commit injustice. Quitting the right road, we invade our neighbour's prerogatives, and deny him his due.

But the path of the just man lies free, open, and undeviating before him : no deceptions border its margin, no seductions allure him aside ; he holds a balance where integrity fills either scale ; his only commander is conscience. He who abandons justice, loses the highest embellishment of his race ; while he who preserves it is distinguished by an immaculate virtue.

The way of the unjust is beset by thorns:† he

* *Smith*, Theory of Moral Sentiment, Part II. Sect. 2. chap. 3.

† *Diogenes Laertius*, lib. x. § 144. in vita Epicuri.

provides annoyance for himself, in swerving from rectitude. Forgetting the character he has to sustain, and the duty he has to perform, he becomes odious to the world, a prey to self-reproach, and the execration of posterity.* That rule is most precise which enjoins the treatment of our neighbours to be exactly such as we would desire to receive at their hands.

Thus it appears how great the aggregate of virtue which is comprehended under justice: that, in respect to others, we are to think justly, to speak justly, to act justly between them and ourselves, and between them and the world: that strict impartiality is to be preserved, through our means, between strangers, and that we commit flagrant iniquity by even the slightest preference. Benevolence is an obligation which it is optional to fulfil; justice a right, the satisfaction of which is imperious.

When so easy to discharge our duties, to preserve absolute impartiality, for an exertion must be made in deviating from the truth, it seems most extraordinary that such numerous complaints are heard of human transactions being tainted with injustice. Some vile wretch seems always prepared to rob us of our fortune, to blot our reputation, or invade our domestic peace. A tremendous bulwark is ever essential to our safety; as it is no fault of the wicked if their ability be inferior to

* *Plato* esteems the unjust the more miserable, if escaping punishment. *Gorgias*.

their project. Human tranquillity is disturbed, and the worst of passions center in the desire to be unjust.

But justice being the standard of the brightest virtues, let us consider by whom it is chiefly embellished. Judging between ourselves and our families, there is less constraint on selfishness; judging between ourselves and strangers, there is more; judging between ourselves and enemies, demands an excess of human resolution to preserve impartiality. He who possesses all that wealth can obtain, has no temptation to dishonesty; nor can enjoyment of the highest reputation admit the jealousy of another's, or of a lower fame. The poor and industrious artizan, whose labour cannot fill his innocent children's mouths, if pilfering for their bread, is still more honest than the wealthy citizen who plunders to augment his overflowing treasures.

That virtue is most immaculate, which withstands the fiercest trial.

Ancient historians, careful to illustrate the shining qualities of men, have recorded the name of some who were the most distinguished for their love of justice. Yet this is a virtue in which the British nation yields to none: it is incorporated with their earliest principles; it is their pride, their honour, and glory; the praise of strangers, the admiration even of their foes. Aristides was called the Just by the Athenians: the Africans would

not ratify any treaty with the Romans unless it bore the name of Scipio: those aggrieved among the Saracens, went to grieve and rent their clothes at the tomb of their departed prince.* But every judge in Britain is esteemed just; every individual may rely on ultimately obtaining justice: the pledge of all her commanders is willingly taken by an enemy; and the transactions of British subjects with the whole world are accredited, where those of other Europeans are distrusted.

Why ought not we to seek the renown of justice, as well as of courage or magnanimity? Yet is there any merit in speaking truth!

Intermixture of the natural affections with the administration of public or private justice, being too strong a temptation to give the scale undue preponderance, certain nations have wisely prohibited cognizance of the cause of relatives; and certain individuals have refused to take it themselves, or have demanded strict impartiality where they might have controlled the judge. Antigonus would not determine the cause of his brother, saying, it was preferable that sentence should be pronounced in the public forum, in the sight and hearing of the people. Philip II. of Spain commanded a decision to be given against himself in every doubtful case where he was a party. Spite of personal interest or natural affection, the judge, supremely just, can triumph over his feelings to avenge a public or a pri-

* *Marin Vie de Saladin*, tom. i. p. 166.

vate wrong. It is not enough to cede a civil right; for though he love the offender, he may hate the offence, and testify his abhorrence in punishment. But who shall stand forth to accuse? who will incur the resentment of wounded pride, or the odium of disgracing those whom partiality would rather honour? "Art thou not my slave," said Mahomet II. to an outraged husband exacting vengeance; "and if my son Mustapha have known thy wife, is she not my bond slave he has had to do withal? Cease, therefore, thus to complain, and hold thyself therewith content." But he ordered the offender to be strangled.*

If mankind are to be avenged for personal wrongs, the strictest justice seems to consist in retaliation; nor, however grievous the detriment, is the sufferer entitled to more in satisfying his private vengeance. But, as already said, there are many injuries which cannot be thus indemnified; and although it may not be always necessary to go quite so far, the public sometimes require a safeguard in higher penalties. Zaleucus, if we shall credit the ancients, enacted a law that an adulterer should lose his eyes; but when his son was brought before him, he ordered him to be blinded of only one, making up the measure of justice by putting out one of his own; and thus from natural affection preserving the culprit.†

* *Knolles*, Turkish History, vol. i. p. 280.

† *Camerarius Opera Subseciva*, tom. i. p. 463. observes, that a person of noble birth having put out the eyes of a priest for

Retributive justice by retaliation, however suitable for the vindication of injuries in the earlier stages of society, necessarily resolves into different forms of commutative vengeance, to redress the wounds of the aggrieved, or to pacify the public, as civilization advances.

Too rigid a desire for the administration of justice has sometimes punished that neglect which met with approbation, while caprice seems to have censured obedience.*

In some foreign countries very imperfect notions appear to prevail regarding the expediency of duly apportioning justice, where there are no natural affections to influence its course. Almost every offender can purchase remission; and the heavier the draughts which the judge can make on his purse, the lighter the penalty he shall undergo. Nay, it has been held by strangers, that execution for robbery or murder, is a direct proof of poverty. Whether is it better that a culprit should be able to redeem himself from punishment, or be exposed

reproving him for heresy, the Emperor Charles IV. ordered a similar punishment to be inflicted on himself, as the sight of the other could not be restored.

* *Brand, Description of Orkney*, p. 122. An obelisk in the Orkney Islands commemorates the death of a rebellious son, by the hands of emissaries, enjoined by his father to seize him whether dead or alive, yet who suffered the same fate for their diligence. When Sulpicius, proscribed by Sylla, was betrayed by his own freedman, Sylla commanded the traitor to be thrown from the Tarpeian rock as a parricide.

to the severity of too rigorous a judge? May not such an anxiety for the strict administration of justice be testified, and so great an eagerness to punish, that persons merely under suspicion shall suffer? Not only, as previously remarked, are penalties decreed altogether disproportionate to offences, but substituting inference along with prejudice for actual proof, a dangerous importance is now given to conjecture in default of evidence. Doubtless the life of many innocent persons has been forfeited of later years: but if Heaven, for whatever cause, has not permitted a crime to be distinctly revealed, we should beware of arrogating an unreasonable share of perspicacity or penetration to ourselves.

The evil propensities, the fierce, uncontrolled, and incorrigible nature of mankind, demand coercion by menaces, and correction by corresponding severity. Everywhere the multitude would disdain restraint, and are prepared for excesses. With them the lenient are timid or contemptible; they invite the wielding of the rod over themselves. The wicked must be frightened from their wicked intent, and compelled to peace.

It is not easy to determine whether it be a greater political error to constitute the judge a legislator, or the legislator a judge. A virtuous governor, liable to all human imperfections, may allow himself to take erroneous views of delinquency: like that celebrated monarch, whose "justice degenerated to the contrary extreme, and was often confounded

with cruelty ; for he used chastisement like revenge, doing that with rage which might have been justifiable had it been done with reason.”*

But the most temperate dispensation of public justice is alone suitable to human infirmity ; for attempting to balance the scale in anger is folly : and if defect be somewhat preferable to excess, the moment that the exact measure of retribution is surpassed, this divine attribute is deprived of its proper name and character. Barbarous vengeance for mean offences will neither reclaim nor be called just, though they intimidate. We are keen and resentful : the burst of passion sets us beside ourselves ; yet every delinquency does not merit extermination. As he is the most patient and forgiving of private injury who has himself under the greatest controul, the judge who tempers justice with clemency proves the best acquainted with the imperfections of human nature.

§ 7. *Censure*.—“ How can we pretend to decide on the propriety or impropriety of an action, unless we know the design of the agent ?”† That conduct of which the motives are unknown may seem most absurd, though originating in consummate prudence : and the result of the most conscientious

* *De Solis*, Conquest of Mexico, Book iv. ch. 15, speaking of Monteruma.

† *Epictetus* Enchiridion.

resolves may exhibit only fallacy and disappointment.

Mankind being bound to preserve the strictest impartiality in judging of every thing in relation to others, they cannot commit more flagrant injustice than in unmerited censure.

But censure is chiefly of two kinds; the one very laudable which is addressed to the agent warning him of his error, that he may guard against its consequences; the other very wicked, pointing it out to the world that it may not escape notice, and thence induce reproach.

Nevertheless, it becomes us to be careful of our actions, and it is beneficial that we should know they are the subject of observation. As the prey is more watchful when in the sight of its enemy, so are we taught greater caution and the stricter scrutiny of our deportment when finding the keenest eyes fixed upon it.

Wonderfully partial to ourselves, and blind to our faults, we arrogate qualities and admit of perfections which never pertained to mortals. Our errors are vehemently denied; we resent their detection, nor willingly credit them on evident demonstration. But the prying eyes of enemies discover all our foibles; malignity treasures them up in their hearts, and they exult in the exposure of what self-confidence and self-approbation concealed. "Though Crassus, the Roman consul, was an exquisite flatterer himself, no one was more easily caught by

flattery than he: and what was very particular, though he was one of the most covetous men in the world, no man was more averse to or more severe against such as resembled him.”*

The emulous are earnest to excell; friends coincide with us in varnishing those failings of which our consciousness would cover us with shame and would urge us to correct. They are betrayed by enemies: we amend our lives, and become better, on knowing that we are not so good as we believed; therefore we are so far safer in the hands of enemies than of friends.

The benevolent are always desirous of giving a favourable interpretation to matters unproductive of evil; the censorious are always anxious to impute wilful error to every one falling under their scourge.

Men are fettered by circumstances: the conduct of the prudent is such as their own allow; their opinions are deliberate, their motives are good, and cautious observation teaches them to expect a profitable and successful issue. The skilful architect never rears his edifice where he knows the foundation is faulty. Accidents unforeseen, those which no human imagination could conceive, have frustrated the whole design. We, the spectators, look no farther than to the immediate result, and rashly conclude that only the single plan laid down in our mind can have produced it. We descant as

* *Plutarch in vita M. Crassi.*

freely of the motives from whence it sprung as if we had been privy to them in the outset.

This is the height of injustice: we voluntarily deviate from candour and impartiality; for we ought to presume that every man acts as well as he is able. The motives may have been altogether different from those we ascribe to the agent; an opposite result might have been promised in all probability; nor is that perfection to be exacted either in design or performance which is denied to human faculties.

The just rules of criticism enjoin an accurate acquaintance with facts preparatory to the most temperate discussion. As there is no object which can be instantly defined by the eye, nor any sound ascertained by the ear, neither can important matters be weighed and verified by judgment without time and deliberation, and especially on casting the perversions of prejudice aside. The senses being adapted for observation, and the mind being purified, we may then proceed to do our office.

Nothing surpassing mediocrity is ever to be expected of character; while all human works must carry human imperfections along with them. Valuable properties, let us recollect, are very slowly unfolded, which unknown or immature, cannot be held as a compensation for glaring defects. If different opinions subsist as to external beauties, which may be comprehended at a single glance, how deeply must the most recondite intellectual ornaments be studied before venturing to declare

their due appreciation, and how patent must the brightest virtues shine !

The forward indiscretion of juvenile petulance, indeed, will not be deterred from precipitate conclusions regarding all matters, however complicated and obscure, as if exacting credit for its cleverness. But that splendid execution which comes of great conception, and those distinguished qualities rendering mankind truly illustrious, require the contemplation of a corresponding mind. The modest and intelligent are reserved : they know that the genuine grandeur belonging to great objects cannot be comprehended at once ; that whoever believes himself to do so, only scans the outskirts ; for his penetration advancing no farther, leaves the remainder in utter darkness : that if any thing be truly abstruse, its immediate solution does not lie within the scope of human powers, while its simplicity only enables our capacity to operate in concert with that of the rest of the world.

Candour nor liberality are ever to be abandoned : nor ought the motives of actions, together with their result, to be sundered from human deficiencies. Censure, though most profitable as a corrective of vice or presumption, becomes itself both vicious and presumptuous by indiscriminate exercise. It is alike inconsistent to expect excellence, as to admit that those who present themselves to the public, design wilful errors, or to act disreputably. But the censorious are seldom scrupulous in regard to their sub-

ject: they hold an unmerciful scrutiny of their neighbours—less for the sake of offering applause, than of visiting them with reprehension. One, they say, abstains from his evident duty; another sinks the lower the farther he is brought into comparison; nothing good can ever come of a third, he has neither virtue, nor learning, nor common sense: yet, strange to tell, though all be endowed with consummate prudence, and the highest qualities of the heart, so faulty are they in the censor's eyes, that were he in their place he would be what none would disapprove. Egregious folly!

How easy is it to undervalue others! How easy to distinguish failings when nature has refused perfection! It costs the malevolent but a word to call virtue vice. But we have now got to the truth. Candour is far less the fountain of censure than malignity; nor is it difficult to discern whether the censor honestly endeavours to correct his neighbour, and guide the public opinion by temperate discussion, or, indulging his own virulence, to invite scornful resentment on exaggerated defects.

The faults of our friends are not to escape admonition, nor is evil to be smothered merely from delicate reserve. The good have a common cause against the bad; the welfare of society demands the sedulous repression of vice. But universally confounding the good in the merited reproach of the bad, destroys the force of contrast, and never can benefit virtue.

The Romans, a great nation, had a public censor. In the present æra, an indiscriminate claim seems to be put in for that office from the incredible arrogance of the age ; and those whose scanty experience, or meagre learning, has compassed a few trite maxims, constitute themselves the arbiters of private worth and useful knowledge.

Ignorance is ready to depreciate. Many an illustrious warrior has been denied courage by those who have been the most careful to shun peril, and who would have quaked even to behold from a distance the forest of steel which was pointed at his breast. Invention and arrangement must proceed from intellect of a higher order : yet we presume to censure what we are not only incapable of conceiving or executing, but are actually unable to comprehend with all its explanations.

Perhaps we are jealous of those qualities which we never have endeavoured to acquire, and we would gratify our spleen by meanly hunting out errors to profit by them. We would lower the reputation of the meritorious, as if to bring our own nearer to its level: "But this is not an honest occupation, nor even an innocent exercise."* Our method is wrong, we have shown our malignity ; but we rise no higher.†

It is an unaccountable weakness, forgetting our own imperfections, to enquire after those of our

* *Balzac Entretiens*, p. 193.

† *Plato Gorgias*.

neighbours;* the absence of which would elevate them to a superior class of beings. The worthy are deeply injured by an anxious concealment of their best qualities, and an illiberal exposure of their defects. Were all the personal infirmities incident to a very short period of our existence concentrated for the sake of being held forth to the eye of mankind, they would shudder at the sight, and fly from us in the dread of contagion. So, were all the errors of life accumulated in proof of character, we might be induced to avoid the wisest as outcasts of society.

We should judge very deliberately where others are concerned, proceeding with equal distrust of ourselves. It is not because a weapon is put into our hands that we may deal out unmerciful blows to all around, or make a deadly thrust at whoever comes within its reach. Offensive measures ought to be those of the last resort: neither the good nor pacific will give them countenance. Human failings are to be treated with tenderness even where the warmth of friendship and the firm conviction of justice demand disapprobation. Virulent censure, however it may be disguised, always argues a severe corrosive and implacable disposition: it is cruel where illiberal, and mean where the accused are precluded from the privilege of self-defence.

* *Cicero Tusc. Quæst. lib. iii. § 30*: Est enim proprium stultitiæ vitia aliorum cernere oblivisci suorum.

Degenerating into habitual malevolence, it induces hatred and contempt; nor shall any merit be found in him who finds nothing right in his neighbours.

§ 8. *Calumny*.—A short transition—short indeed, will carry us from censure to calumny, too often to be regarded as a twin birth of their common parent malevolence. But while candid censure may possibly originate in laudable motives, or come of ignorance and indiscretion, genuine calumny never can have any other source than artful and depraved contrivance. It is inseparable from a mischievous intent. Like those rank weeds, which only a soil the most corrupt can nourish, the root of this baneful vice must be sought among the basest passions of the human heart,—those that degrade our nature, and are reproachful to our race. Hatred, jealousy, envy, treachery, and wanton wickedness, all unite in its propagation.

Calumny is a merciless monster, seeking to devour the innocent; and the deeper the wound, the sweeter is the victim's blood.

Conscious that the day would betray its loathsome aspect, the scorpion, unsocial, lurks in solitary haunts, awaiting the unwary with its envenomed sting. So does the slanderer cunningly shield himself in darkness: "for every one that doeth evil hateth the light." He shrinks from the honourable face of man—he falsifies himself by a borrowed name. He is a coward in his crime.

The liberal are willing to put the best interpretation on human conduct: the censorious find it faulty, the slanderer violates truth, and "knowing well that his deeds are deeds of baseness, he is artfully concealed while giving detraction some shadow of justice."*

Conscience whispers that we dare not offend with impunity, it tells the slanderer that he has to atone to the injured, but it makes him pusillanimous: he trembles for fear of punishment, and he wraps himself up in mystery. When has he courage to meet the victim of his clandestine poisons; when does he boldly issue forth, avowing, "I am he whom you seek?" He is a coward in his crime.

The ancients compare the slanderer to a wild beast or a venomous serpent, ferocious in his malice; but they fail to define the cowardice attendant on his cruelty.†

Such being the characteristics of calumny, is not the calumniator vile?

Human felicity can be promoted only by mutual friendship, concession, and indulgence: we must take an interest in each other for the common good: there is strength in concord, pleasure in benevolence, confidence in peace.

But while the breast of the virtuous is serene, the vicious cannot be idle: they have a restless anxiety to be active in mischief. They put us on our guard:

* *Senault l'Usage des Passions*, Part ii. Tr. v. Disc. 2. p. 502.

† *Diogenes Laertius*, lib. vi. § 17.

they compel us to keep watch against their nature : “ for it is just as rational to conclude, that a reprobate will avoid doing wickedly, as that an unripe fig shall not be sour, that a horse shall not neigh, children cry in the cradle, or that a great many things shall not occur from conditions which are necessary to their existence. Therefore, how can a vile disposition act otherwise”

Yet where others may plead the selfishness incorporated by nature, instigating them to seek benefit, or avoid evil, the slanderer is injurious less from consulting essential profit than an odious gratification. Like the cruel, who are not cruel from anger, but have a savage pleasure in cruelty.

It is painful to reflect that, spite of all admonition, the weakness, credulity, and depravity of mankind, give encouragement to the slanderer.† Were his iniquity duly estimated, were the vice and the mischief he rejoices in disseminating suitably reprehended, he would be expelled from the society of the virtuous, and branded with eternal disgrace. But knowing the propensity which gives ear to his invention, that the evil of the human heart will help out his fancy, and give embellishment to his words, he ventures on his privilege, and remains.‡

* *Antoninus Meditationes*, lib. xii. § 16.

† *Tacitus Historiæ*, lib. i. cap. i. *Obtrectatio et livor prona auribus accipiuntur.*

‡ *Typotius de Fama*, p. 18. *Maledicendi autem libido animos omnium titillat.*

Little penetration can discover what is amiss in mankind. Credulity leads an audience, already half-disposed, to believe disparagement; indolence prohibits the doubtful from sifting the truth, which, together with that malevolent jealousy predominant of better reputation, all conspire to aid the slanderer, and fix his envenomed sting. Those of low attainments and servile soul, who despair of advancing by their own merit, think that vilifying others can raise them on their ruins; they endeavour to depreciate the good, and to make the bad seem worse. All these are so many inducements to spurn aside the slanderer, lest we ourselves be the next to suffer. Let us be assured his plots are always evil; he betrays himself in his baseness: the bad alone can reap pleasure from his presence.

A good name is the gift of our fellow-men: it is not to be purchased with gold: it is that reward which only virtue can obtain—which the wicked can never receive. If lost, we are overwhelmed with shame,—and misery is our lot if irrecoverable. How precious, then, is its preservation! But not less precious are our domestic felicity, the continuance of concord, of love and friendship, the rights to charity, and the privilege of benevolence. If the integrity of the just is to be challenged, if the purity of the chaste shall be sullied, and the courage of the brave belied with impunity by the slanderer, let us at once break down the ramparts of fame, and say that public reverence and private regard, that honour and patriotism, may be rooted

out,—and still no evil. Divine and human ordinances enjoin protection of the weak, and the safety of the innocent; mankind are reciprocally bound to harbour mercy, to sooth affliction, to foster peace, to respect virtue. What are the doings of the slanderer? Trampling on religion, he impiously violates the decrees of Heaven: he makes a mockery of justice, and falsifies truth, to prepare a deadly engine in ambush, which when brought to light: wounds the heart of the affectionate, by sowing division among them: he treacherously undercuts his tender reputation, whose delicacy withers at the breath of suspicion. Horrible villain! he invites ruin by hidden assassination: pain finds no pity in his eye; virtue itself has no refuge from his mortal weapon.

What comparison will hold between the public robber or the thief of the night, and the diabolical machinations of the slanderer conspiring against our dearest possessions? Courage or caution will defend us: we measure the strength of our enemy, we stand or fall for our own defence and protection. What comparison will the venerable warrior make between the wounds he has faced in battle, and the clandestine detraction of his dastardly foe? The pain of the one may be endured: innate valour, the sense of duty, the joy of victory, and the glory of his country, inspiring him with resignation, soften torment; but where he cannot vindicate his name

by vengeance, the suffering is intolerable ; it is worse than death.

The poison spreads its deep corrosion before the injured know to offer an antidote to calumny. Excellence is degraded, feuds are sundering friends, domestic ties are broken, hatred and contempt engender distrust, a dark and pestiferous vapour involves spotless purity—and innocence is called innocence no more. Meantime, the monster exultingly beholds the devastation surrounding him, and smiles over the ruins of human peace.

Some patriotic persons, from the ardent love of virtue, strive for the repression of vice, and to promote the public good. They proceed conscientiously, saying nothing of the sincerity of their designs, but content with beholding the fruits of energetic benevolence. Let us not seek after such rare and honest citizens among those who make a loud boast of integrity, and proclaim their professions of duty.

The traducer, too artful not to discover that his sting might be blunted by the good opinion of the world, which surely helps to silence calumny, pleads an imperious obligation to the public as a cover for his malevolence. Sometimes he calls in the subsidiary aid of satire, whereby our imperfections and foibles, those attributes restricting us to the human condition, the very course we pursue to excel, and the warmth of our best affections, are taken as the medium of rendering us ridiculous. Men are odious to him because they are good : our vir-

tues are then held to be vices, and the visitations of nature qualified as personal offences. If no two objects be precisely alike in proceeding from the hand of Omnipotence, who can presume to exact resemblance to the shadow of his imagination, and offer contempt or derision for the want of correspondence? The most amiable have failings: mortal excellence is yet full of imperfections: all the good sink under their own afflictions, and the casualties befalling their kindred. Alas, are these to become suitable topics for satire! But we find fault because the will of Providence has not been accommodated to our wishes. Impious wretches! how dare we arraign the decrees of Heaven in making a mockery of human infirmities! How can we hope impunity in holding up the calamities of the virtuous for sport and entertainment! It is too shocking to know that there are monsters capable of such enormities. Not less atrocious is it to violate the feelings of the worthy, or to lower their estimation with the world, than it would be to inflict personal wounds upon them. It is no less wicked to turn a good man to ridicule, notwithstanding he alone be ignorant of it. What though the traducer proclaim his duty to the public that of his own creation, it will not cloak his malevolence. We never can avoid suspecting the liberality of the self-elected to office, or the candour of one who aims at affording diversion to another's cost, especially if he lurks in hiding. Ridicule and satire, indeed, may be

suitably employed to humble arrogance and discourage vice; but instruments of malignity become dangerous weapons in dangerous hands, and are too ready to deteriorate virtue.

Every intelligent, humane, and liberal mind, has ample topics for interesting discussion in store, without appealing to malevolence for those of needless injury.

But ought we to regard the calumny assailing our name? ought we not rather to agree with the philosophic Antoninus, that "it is weak to be angry with the rude?" or, as Epictetus enjoins, to affirm our imperfections are still more numerous than those alleged? or say, with Ælian, that slander and derision are unavailing against the resolute,—that we are to set obloquy at nought?—Doubtless the sage will advance fearlessly and unconcernedly; nor will he swerve from his praise-worthy object for all the words of the wicked. His fortitude is invulnerable: the darts fall pointless at his feet. But are not many of the excellent unshielded by this adamantine armour? are not the sensibilities of the gentle ever open to the wounding of scorn? Socrates went to the theatre, knowing that he was to be ridiculed on the stage; and to solve the doubts of the audience as to the character represented, he freely exposed himself to view. He held the slander in contempt: his lofty and philosophic soul enabled him to soar above it. But Poliagras, another Athe-

nian, sunk under the shame of derision on a similar occasion, and strangled himself.*

The mind untainted is delicate in conscious innocence; that which it was incapable of contemplating is abhorrent; nor can it brook indignity. The best and most virtuous of mankind are so apprehensive of dishonour clouding their fame, that the slightest imputations are intolerable. Our earnestness in self-vindication proves our sensibility of reproach.

Forgiveness of injury is an excellent maxim, a happy temper, an eminent virtue. But is it always expedient?—The aspic may again lurk among the fruit: the scorpion is ever turgid with venom. Crush it when first unsheathing its sting; further victims are safe. Lenity, the palliative of indiscretion, is not the cure of vice; the wicked do not quit their nature; their deeds are habits, they are identified with iniquity. Does the robber say to himself, “I will rob no more?” or, “now having robbed, I am ready to rob again?” The sight of blood whets the appetite of the assassin.

The whole mass of society is interested in bringing a dangerous offender to justice: it is the duty of the strong to bind him down, that he may not injure the weak.

Conscious innocence, indeed, may sustain the vir-

* *Antoninus Meditationes*, lib. xi. § 9. *Epictetus Enchiridion*, § 48. *Ælian Variæ Historiæ*, lib. ii. cap. 13.; lib. v. cap. 8.

tuous against the foul aspersions of their fame: they appeal to mankind in their behalf, and invoke divine justice to preserve them from ruin. But when they feel with anguish, that the poison is successfully circulating; when they see themselves shunned where wont to be welcomed; when contempt hangs on the lip, and the finger of scorn is pointed as they come, of what avail is their innocence?

We are unworthy of a boon if we cannot be resolute in its maintenance and defence; and although meekness should expell pride, and charity teach forgiveness, true magnanimity more imperiously prohibits the toleration of wanton malevolence. Reputation is the most sacred possession, and the most precious of our enjoyments; but how can we hope the esteem of posterity, if contemporaries asperse our name, and yet remain unpunished?*

Nature herself inspires love and gratitude to the beneficent: we worship the author of good; nor is aversion to the evil by which we suffer, the result of tuition. Where outraged feelings can permit, perhaps we shall do well to smile at detraction, and despise the slanderer. Offences personal and exclusively directed against ourselves may be forgiven: our tranquillity should not be easily disturbed. Yet does the man merit pardon who, in the vile-

* *Fuller, Holy State, Book III. Chap. 18.* "The pamphlets of this age may pass for records with the next, because publicly uncontrolled; and what we laugh at, our children may believe."

ness of his heart, would stain us with infamy, who would expose us to the odium of the world, who strives to make life unsupportable?

If conscience do not breed remorse, sometimes the traducer is reached by the offended laws of society, and the shame brought to recoil on his own head with which he would have visited others.* Sometimes offended honour, becoming implacable, a terrible penalty in just retaliation awaits him from the hand of the injured.†

During the year 1822, a man of rank and talents, also recently a member of the British senate, by means of a despicable composition, employed that satirical vein held a national feature, in traducing a respectable gentleman who had embarked keenly on the opposite side of party politics.‡ Many

* *Aristotle* Polit. lib. ii. cap. 10. *Diodorus Siculus*, lib. xii. § 12: By a law of the Locrians, calumniators were crowned with a certain herb to stigmatize their iniquity, which was felt so severe a punishment, that some of the guilty committed suicide.

† *Moryson*, who wrote above 200 years ago, says, "the English being most impatient of reproaches, and the law giving ridiculous satisfactions for injuries by word, and all wrongs excepting maims, it hath been accounted a disgraceful course to seek remedy that way; and most injuries have commonly been revenged by the sword in single combat."—*Ten Years Travel*, Part III. Book 4. chap. 5.

‡ *Wendeborn*, *View of England*, vol. ii. p. 204. considers the taste for that satire prevalent, "which delights more in that which is overdone, than in that which shews refinement, pointed delicacy, and real wit."

vile productions at that time levelled at the best and most inoffensive, menaced the peace of the community, in kindling a flame, which the prudent spectator at a distance easily foresaw must infallibly burst forth in destructive fury. Some of the meaner agents were dragged from their retreats to justice: others, too pusillanimous to avow themselves, trusted to concealment for their safety. This odious effusion appeared in one of the public journals, a real firebrand, where its subject had been already cruelly traduced; but, like other calumniators, its imprudent author remained tranquil from the secrecy which he had observed in his communication. He was detected, however, and the needless outrage proving far beyond verbal atonement, he was called on to satisfy his egregious indiscretion with his life. The author knew him well, and he deeply regrets the unhappy fate to which he was brought by his own temerity; for although quite indefensible in respect to the harmless object of his animosity, certainly he was hurried away more by political fervour than malevolence: nor is his name to be irredeemably associated with those whom nothing but malignity instigates.* Nevertheless, detraction

* The tide of popular favour is affirmed to have run so strong in favour of the injured person, that the public authorities could not resolve to put him an hour under restraint; and acclamations in the streets hailed his acquittal from a trial to which he voluntarily advanced, accompanied by a few friends as his only escort.

being as effectually repressed by fear, as corrected by punishment, this is said to have been a profitable example in its severity, and to have been the means of preserving many lives from a single sacrifice.

If men can venture on wantonly infringing the rights of their neighbours, they must abide the consequences, over which, they may be assured, they cannot have any ultimate controul.

§ 9. *Courtesy*.—Reader, shall we never cease railing at the world? Is the catalogue of vice and imperfection so exhaustless, as to preclude that brief commentary which would discuss the virtues of mankind? Already have we shewn that, amidst the abundance of deficiency, the best of all our prerogatives and enjoyments is the least owing to ourselves: that health and symmetry, rank and riches, are any gifts but our own. For what is the haughty chieftain indebted to himself, who counts on the inferiority to which his vassals are removed, who glories in the magnitude of his possessions, and proudly boasts of that long line of warlike ancestry transmitting the dignity he inherits? If by a chance, call it fortunate, he finds his elevation high above those environing him, he will court their love by favour; for affection is a warmer sentiment than reverence.—And it is an easy purchase; as some of the lower virtues of the great seem more impressive than those of purer source and truly brighter lustre, emanating from a humbler sphere.

Let us ask why those of the illustrious are not always beloved, who have courtesy and munificence always at command?

The virtues of polished life are the charm and bond of society, like the kind affections, the purifiers of the heart, ever useful and agreeable, even when they are not indispensable. The warmth of courtesy denotes how much we are occupied with others, how anxious we are to gratify their feelings, how little for the time we are occupied with self. But sincerity must be its companion; for it is not by adjusting the looks and gestures, nor by the affectation of complacency, that men are most cordial. Politeness is called a virtue of the great, doing little honour to any unless themselves.* Yet surely the virtues do not rate themselves by rank, but intrinsic value; for the courtesy of the humble cottage, which welcomes the wanderer, could not be enhanced. Grace and goodness are nature's gifts, though few receive them. Is the garland wove by the hands of the blooming shepherdess less tasteful, is the refreshing beverage drawn from her flock less gracefully offered from her simplicity, or received with diminished interest?† Urbanity is not confined to cities only.

* *Smith*, Theory of Moral Sentiments, Part I. Sect. iii. chap. 2.

† *Burckhardt*, Travels in Syria and the Holy Land, p. 530: This traveller, in a distant region, found an Arabian mother and her daughter dwelling under rude shelter of reeds and brushwood, to whom his guide being known, they received a hearty

Natural courtesy is the true indication of benevolence: it encourages the approach of the timid, and welcomes the presence of the stranger: it props the faltering of diffidence, and construes wishes into words. We feel the cold and heartless smile of ceremony as the signal of dismissal; the simple glance of the courteous bids us remain, or invites our return. Our restraints are banished; we are greeted with joy and sincerity; we retire from the scene, alike gratified with them and satisfied with ourselves; the friendly sentiments we have heard, the words of solicitude in our concerns, are agreeably treasured up in remembrance. But chilled by haughty arrogance, formality seems rebuke: awed into silence, we retreat in disgust, resolute never to meet the rude repulse again. No wonder then that we say courtesy and good manners are engaging, the natural dress of virtue, the indication of those affections which are truly honourable and lovely.* The courteous bear satisfaction wherever they go. It is said by the ancients of a Persian monarch, that he testified as much satisfaction on receiving presents, as those could shew

welcome. "The daughter was a very handsome girl of 18 or 19, graceful in her deportment, and modest in her behaviour, as the best educated European female. Indeed I have often had occasion to remark among the Bedouins, comparing them with the women of the most polished parts of Europe, that grace and modesty are not less than beauty the gifts of nature."

* *Hutcheson*, Moral Philosophy, Book II. chap. 16. § 8.

who reaped favours from himself: and while he did bestow them, his countenance always shone with benignity and pleasure. Some kind and agreeable expression awaited every thing: "even when a certain person named Omisus brought him a pomegranate of uncommon size, he exclaimed, by the light of Mithra, this man, if he were made governor of a small city, would soon raise it to a large one!"

So is courtesy the honour of the great, the union of equals, the recommendation of the humble; the best regulator of social commerce, and a duty forbidding us to allow any one to depart in dissatisfaction.*

But shall not we suspect extraordinary courtesy as savouring of guile or flattery; that it is rather a show than a proof of sincerity; as gracious manners, words of condescension, and a smiling countenance, may only bespeak a thorough acquaintance with the world? Are we ever more effectually our own dupes, than by believing sincerity to be in necessary alliance with politeness, when captivated by a specious demeanour, seemingly meeting our wishes, and forgetting that what flatters the senses deludes the understanding? If designing to form a true estimate of things, let us cautiously abstain from construing unmeaning phrases into definite declarations; let us study the character of him whom we address, his general ends and purposes; and if

* *Eutropius Breviarium*, lib. vii. cap. 14.

it be less on his account than our own, let us recall our precise relation to him, and be very careful of allowing ourselves to be seduced into false opinions by hopes or prospects. Some spontaneous aid is offered if we will take it; for Nature herself, ever true, betrays in the very physiognomy of man the secret sentiments most predominant in his breast.

The ordinary rules of social intercourse enjoin an apparent interest in those whom we know not, nor ever saw. But it becomes us to restrain our courtesy within moderate bounds, lest overdone it degenerate into fawning or flattery.* Prudence prohibits a general invitation of the confidence of all mankind.

It seems therefore that this gentle virtue is a debt due to society, which each, whatever be his name, or whatever be the place he occupies, always has at will, and is always bound to discharge.

§ 10. *Munificence*.—If munificence be conjoined with courtesy, the heart is won for ever. No wonder truly that smiles and complacency, accompanied by the distribution of what the multitude covet most, should gain their esteem, their love, and admiration.

* *Morier*, Second Journey through Persia, p. 57. says, "I was present once when the prime minister of Persia gave instructions to a man who was sent to greet a Russian officer on his arrival, and his principal injunction was, 'Be sure that you give him plenty of flattery.'"

The generous are mankind of a superior soul, despising selfishness, and willingly parting with that which our nature grovels to get, and when got which keeps us in bondage. The least they have is more than enough for themselves; they have always a surplus to be given away; their delight is distribution: kind and considerate, their gifts are rendered such as to be true benevolence.

What is the strongest of human propensities? It is to retain fast hold of what is obtained; to hide it lest it be taken away; to part with the smallest share if voluntarily divided; and always to reserve an extra portion for self. Possession generates the desire of further acquisition, heaps are added to heaps, treasures swell on treasures. The study of the avaricious is how to obtain something from their fellows: it is the hardest to be restrained; it grows in the cradle, and descends to the grave. But the generous are unjust to themselves rather than to their neighbours: they convert their goods to the real purpose for which they are worthy of being sought: their virtue is diffusing itself in tangible demonstration. Generosity seems an inversion of the original dispositions of nature. Are the sordid known to have ever become generous?

Some, however, have thirsted for conquest for the sake of glory, who were no less gratified by giving away their possessions than by enlarging them; whose natural munificence increased with their extraordinary acquisitions, and was accompanied by

that gracious manner which embellishes bounty.* They have felt how much more agreeable it is to the liberal to give than to receive. The Sultan Saladin kept nothing to himself,—he gave every thing away: though master of Syria, of Arabia Felix, and Mesopotamia, which paid him tribute, his coffers when he died contained but 37 pieces of silver, and a single crown of gold: nor had he any private property. Money was borrowed to pay the expense of his funeral.†

Genuine generosity is pure and spontaneous: it is accompanied by an absolute disregard of self. But we absurdly form a false estimate of the pleasure of possessions: we think very long of quitting with very little: we would rather submit to self-denial or curb our appetites. We give, it is from vain ostentation, in compliance with example: we wish to rate our obligations from duty, the same as the gifts of benevolence.

Nevertheless, the truly generous exceed the number of those whose name is celebrated for generosity; for secret inclinations are not so easily demonstrated as their patent exercise. A small specimen may be a testimony of great virtue. The niggardly hand of fortune withholds many of the earnest to be generous; and many involuntarily recoil from a donation as unworthy when compared with the tribute of others, though they would have gladly conferred it unseen.

* *Plutarch in vita Alexandri.*

† *Marin Histoire de Saladin, vol. ii. p. 234.*

Liberality, however, consists not so much in the intrinsic value of the gift, as in the temper and habit of the donor; and he who gives least of all may be the most generous, provided the donation bears the highest proportion to his fortune.* Did not the widow of Scripture cast into the treasury "all that she had, even all her living?"

But discriminative generosity, that which is tempered by prudence, is the best. Profusion does not imply generosity; for no virtue should be called such, if conjoined with needless imprudence. Nor, reasoning on the circumstances wherein the world is placed, does any one prodigal of his whole estate in gratuities, even from benevolence, act otherwise than imprudently. The most fertile soil requires skilful husbandry in turning it to the best account, and the most successful husbandman must be provident of his stores. There are scarcely any natural propensities, or any ordinary occasions, exacting such an exercise of munificence as to exhaust the fountain whence it is to be drawn. If ever to be commended, it is where another's benefit is so great at our expense that indigence itself is obliterated from view by the subsequent advantage. That kind of liberality seems the best, which, in selecting suitable objects, and somewhat restrained, preserves us in a condition to repeat our benefactions. Many virtues are estimable, but their excellence consists in

* *Aristotle Ethici*, lib. iv. cap. 1.

the aggregate good to which they are directed ; for this is the test of the heart and the understanding. Alexander Severus attentively studied the advantage of individuals, and if knowing that they either had made no requests, or were very moderate in their expectations, he called them to him, saying, "Wherefore is it that you ask nothing? do you wish to make me your debtor? Ask now, lest when in need you may complain of me."* Some men of exalted mind have looked on gifts as obligations, and held them as the first duties of the great.† The name of Cæsar was magnified "from his munificence, and the extent of his benefactions." Mark Antony was wont to say, that he rendered the grandeur of the Roman empire more illustrious by what he gave away, than from what he received. His generosity was of that kind which may be called large and liberal ; his consideration not being cost, but how things might be done most handsomely. On a certain occasion, having ordered an enormous sum to be given to one of his friends, his treasurer, startled at such extravagance, collected the silver in a heap, and laid it in his way to warn him of its magnitude. "I really thought," said Antony, "that the sum would have made a better appearance. It is too little, let it be doubled."‡ So long as any thing

* *Ælius Lampridius* in *vita Alexandri Severi*, § 46.

† *De Solis*, *Conquest of Mexico*, Book iv. chap. 15. speaking of Montezuma.

‡ *Plutarch* in *vita Antonini*.

remains to be gifted, the multitude plead as much for the donor as for the donation; and thus were Mark Antony's irregularities effaced by his remarkable munificence.

A few worthy persons seem to live more for others than for themselves: they shew the real gratification reaped from generosity, and the excellence of such a virtue opposed to the natural selfishness of mankind. Despising the meanness of accumulation, they turn their wealth to that proper purpose for which it ought to be thought of any value, always enquiring whether the gift be worthy of the donor. Margaret de Valois, the first Queen of Henry IV. proved herself the true descendant of her race, say the French historians, from her noble and generous disposition. She never offered a gift without an apology for its smallness. Distinguished examples of munificence preserved by history are less numerous than is creditable to mankind; nor where giving due praise to the generous, are we to allow ourselves to be misled by motives.

Generosity is one of the bright rays of benevolence, on which the state of society and the effect of artificial wants have an important operation. Luxury inspires a warmer regard of self: importunity and imposture would cool the callous. Although the number of those not only expecting but entitled to gifts and patronage, infinitely exceeds the individuals who can be gratified, all mankind do not thirst alike for the goods of others. Nurtured

in sentiments of independence, philosophically content with the most moderate enjoyments, they have refused to avail themselves of proffered munificence. *Ælian* devotes a chapter to the history of "certain excellent poor men who declined donations;"* and the truly philosophic were understood of old to despise wealth.† "Indeed," says *Fortius*, "it always was, and ever shall be my disposition, to prefer the utmost indigence to the greatest riches;" and coinciding with some of the ancients, he affirms, poverty to be the parent of all the arts.‡ But he dreaded the corruption of his mind, and the interruption of his studies, by opulence. Where the virtue of hospitality subsists in highest purity, the offer of remuneration is offensive, and excites dislike in the sense of humiliation, which the guest thus occasions.§

But without falling under the class of the indigent, or enforcing the paradox of *Fortius*, there are some who have no vacant wishes. *Christiern Wolff*, an eminent author of the preceding century, always answered the King of Sweden desiring him to ask favours, "I require nothing."—The minister of Queen Anne was disgraced for discharging what he considered a public duty in oppo-

* *Ælian Variæ Historiæ*, lib. xi. cap. 9; vide lib. i. cap. 25.

† *Digest.* lib. L. tit. 5. l. 8. § 4: Vere Philosophantes pecuniam contemnunt.

‡ *Fortius de Ratione Studii.* Cap. 4, Opes Debere Contemni.

§ *Burckhardt*, Travels in Syria and the Holy Land, p. 486.

sition to her private inclinations. He retired to the country, retrenched his establishment, and endeavoured to accommodate his way of life to the wreck of his fortune. The public esteem accompanied him; and many persons attached to the court, tendered the use of their purses. The Queen herself offered him a pension, that he might live suitably to his quality as a nobleman. He refused it, saying, "As he was no longer in her Majesty's service, it was not consistent that he should receive any reward." *

With such imposing prerogatives as rank and fortune, and the means of courtesy, why, we may reiterate, are not those in possession of them always beloved and respected? Setting aside human selfishness, and admitting, as is sometimes true, that our own immediate interest stands lowest in self-estimation, we are to be won by the most engaging attractions. If those invested with what is calculated to make the readiest advances to the heart are not beloved and respected, their deportment is repulsive, or they disappoint public expectation.

Courtesy, perhaps, is a gift of nature, which has been reserved from some of the best among mankind, or they have not the art of displaying it. But the worst of the opulent can easily diffuse sensible benefits in fictitious generosity. Though gentle and complacent, we have not always the same agreeable words at command, either in social

* *Murali*, Letters, p. 54.

or in ceremonious intercourse ; nor are the features of every one alike prepared to greet his worthiest friend with external cordiality. With due observance of the other virtues of polished life, we shall ever find the deepest impression produced by courtesy and generosity, and that they are the certain means of procuring the most lasting esteem.

§ 11. *Sense of Dishonour.*—The possession and practice of many shining virtues will prove of little comparative pleasure to ourselves, or benefit to our neighbours, unless an acute sense of dishonour reside in the heart,—that companion of purity, and protector of justice, which neither will endure the slightest disgrace, nor stoop to what is disgraceful.

But it is doubtful whether this delicate passion be any integral part of the original constitution of mankind ; whether it be not entirely generated by education, and awakened by the presence of society. In the simplicity of nature, or the lowest condition of the human race, personal exposure is not known to suffuse the cheek of beauty with blushes. The boldest warrior may shun danger without disgrace ; the post may be surrendered by the flight of its guardian on the sight of a stronger foe. Contempt is not induced by falsehood, nor is dishonesty accounted unworthy, among the rude and unpolished tribes of men.

But all this is reversed by civilization : matchless effrontery alone can endure personal exposure with-

out distress : we tremble at the reproach of deficiency of candour, or courage, or probity.

The sense of dishonour has animated the soldier with valour ; it has made cowards desperate ; it has snatched the wreath amidst peril, and regained the day to the forsaken.

As the good are always good, the honourable cannot brook dishonour ; and thus is the character of men distinguished. A wrong is not the less a wrong because it wants a witness, or the author of it lurks in secret. But the genuine sense of dishonour makes vice odious, whether reserved from the sight of men, or rendered patent to the day : whether it be actually perpetrated, or only held in contemplation. The vicious are restrained by external, the virtuous by internal barriers, which are nothing weakened as the others are taken away.

What then can be more essential to our private profit, to the public weal and common tranquillity, than a delicate sense of dishonour ? It forbids our yielding to the seduction of the passions, and sternly opposes our infractions of duty. It prompts us to the courageous defence of our own fame, and prohibits us from wounding the fame of our neighbours. It preserves the honesty of the merchant, the integrity of judges, and the chastity of the fair. Where the waverings of the heart, or the snares of the insidious, threaten to overpower our weakness, it rises in glorious array as protecting armour, under which we can retreat to defend our happiness in our reputa-

tion. Let us view the dangers which beset the budding rose, ere yet the sun, in genial warmth, expands its flourish. Let us view the wiles, the lures, and fascinations, environing youthful beauty, ere yet the voice of reason comes to admonish caution, or suspicion fills the breast. The dread of dishonour is the monitor stilling sensibility: Virtue will not abandon the post it has bound itself to maintain.

Human conduct never can come under the controul of a more powerful ascendant, or lead to more decided consequences. But in civilized society, it is remarkable that, among men, vices certainly of a darker complexion seem to lose their character when brought into comparison with pusillanimity; thus rendering the sense of dishonour most delicate and imperious, in regard to reputation for courage. Our weaker helpmates have always testified the highest esteem for the brave, and the utmost contempt of cowardice: and the tender or the timid, who felt the pain of their dearest relatives as their own, have shewn, that they would rather see them perish than escape and be dishonoured. Is it that the remembrance of the earlier barbarities and indignities to which the unresisting were so much exposed amidst the uncertainties of ruder life, has been thus handed down to posterity? We cannot seek another origin. But whatever be its source, most true it is that the splendour of such a virtue, can be sufficiently appreciated only by those over whom its wings have

spread, and by those who have suffered deadly wrongs because they could not retreat beneath their shelter. *

* *Brantome*, it has been remarked, writes a discourse, " Sur ce que les Belles et Honnestes Dames aiment les Vaillants Hommes," but it is not adapted for the delicacy of the present day. A Moldavian Prince being defeated, fled to a city held by his mother with a strong garrison. Refusing to open the gates at his command, she exclaimed indignantly from the walls, " O son, since the time of thy birth I never saw thee return from battle without victory ! I had rather thou perished by the hand of an enemy, than be branded with the infamy of being saved by a woman. Fly hence, therefore, and return either conqueror, or never." Stung with the reproach, he obeyed, and fortune crowned his enterprize.—In another region, Caupolican, a celebrated Aurucanian chief, being compelled to yield to his cruel enemies the Spaniards, his wife, who never ceased exhorting him rather to die than surrender, angrily cast his infant son towards him when she saw he was taken, saying, she would not retain any thing belonging to a coward.—A soldier in India, who is said to have been passionately attached to his wife, and reciprocally beloved by her, " had fled from the fight, not so much out of any fear of death, as out of consideration of the grief she would suffer if left a widow." Discovering the reason of his return, she shut the door against him, declaring, if he had preferred regard for her to his own honour, she would endeavour to teach her children more courage than their father possessed. The soldier returned to the army, where, having redeemed his reputation, he was welcomed by his wife with open arms.—The French historians relate, that, during the civil wars of the sixteenth century, Constance de Cezelli, a lady of high rank and remarkable loyalty, refused to surrender a castle even to purchase her husband's life from the hands of his enemies. *Cantemir*, History of the Othman Empire, p. 48. *Molina*, History of Chili, vol. ii. p. 191. *Tavernier*, Travels, Book iii. chap. 3.

From a still more delicate sense of dishonour, yet fomented perhaps by the rage of despotic man, it seems as if restricting the latitude admitted in original associations, the progress of refinement had now declared only a single offence by the fair as incapable of extenuation.

We dread disgrace in imputation almost as keenly as if the charge were true; and so acute is the sensation of apprehended shame, that we feel the fault of our relatives as if reflected on ourselves, and stigmatizing us with the note of infamy. Of all pitiable situations which the mind can figure, is the guiltless being betrayed into apparent degradation, and denied the means of vindicating their name. To them can fortitude be of no avail, death is a welcome refuge; yet they die with their reputation unredeemed, and their progeny may blush to own who were the authors of their being.

The sense of dishonour seems to take the command of reason, to infuriate the other passions, or to keep them subservient. It is one alike stimulating the most glorious enterprises, teaching the most heroic sacrifice, and exasperating the most deadly revenge. It kindles emulation, and animates hatred. Hence does the injured husband bereave his faithless partner of existence, or pursue the paramour sundering his domestic ties to the gates of destruction: and hence is the traducer followed over the world, that the foul aspersions he has offered against immaculate reputation may be washed out with his blood.

The firmest pledge for the proper and amiable discharge of the social duties is obtained from a refined sense of dishonour. So long as shame is dreaded, that which is shameful will be shunned. In respecting ourselves we shall respect our neighbours; for honour never quits the honourable, more than integrity is disclaimed by the just.

§ 12. *Choice of Society.*—Human nature being modified by education, and sentiment confirmed by habit, the choice of original associates, as well as of subsequent companions, becomes a matter of inconceivable importance; for on this will much of our honour and felicity be found to depend. Mankind are necessarily rendered almost entirely the children of imitation, from being nowhere left to themselves; and because the scope of their extraordinary propensities, where they have any, is restricted in its exercise. Though vice and imperfection be incorporated with our birth, the sparks of virtue, perhaps, may be elicited, and improvement flourish by the precepts of the good; if worthy principles be innate, their excellence may be corrupted, and their practice eradicated by vicious example.

Not less liable is the mind to pernicious contagion, than is the person to infectious disease.*

The youthful disposition, from its early ductility, may be directed in any channel, or moulded into any

* *Seneca de Ira*, lib. iii. cap. 8.

form : it insensibly acquires a corresponding character, from the temper or sentiments of those around it. Thus it becomes grave or sprightly, artful or candid, devout or profane, according to what is seen, or heard, or practised, before the true effect is weighed by the understanding. Even long posterior, when the opinions of mankind are fixed in maturity, their feelings are influenced by the companies they enter. With the mirthful, hilarity brightens wit; they contribute to enliven the jocund hours of pleasure; or, mingling with the splenetic, they join in the sneer of malignity, or perchance continue cheerless, silent, and morose.

Probably our virtuous sympathies, if altogether unrestrained, would be an unerring guide to the selection of associates, which, like the choice of friends, will be those whom we would benefit, and to whom our welfare is not indifferent. As the chief pleasures of life flow from the indulgence of sympathies, and all living nature being thus allied, none can be so acceptable to each other as those whose souls are in unison. Temerity and caution will not blend well together, nor generosity and avarice; the heart of the benevolent has no place for the profligate; the coarse and brutal disgust the delicate; the wise cannot enjoy the society of the foolish : neither can the vicious and virtuous agree. Even those fierce animals which wage war against the other tenants of their native forests, dwell in peace, where they can gratify their pro-

pensities. They are guided by instincts: Mankind, endowed with the rational faculties, whose principles are of the same tenor, who think after the same fashion, whose pursuits are congenial, and contemplate with the same eyes a common object, unite in greatest harmony.

But preferences betray our nature: if we enjoy the society of the virtuous, it is good; if we affect the company of the vicious, it is bad. Profligates mingle together; the idle and the dissolute throng to debauchery; licentiousness, inebriation, and uproar at length swell the riot, and disturb the tranquillity of the world.

The bold and the daring are never better satisfied than when in the heart of desperate enterprise; the philosopher when scrutinising the wonders of the universe; the robber is intent only on his prize, the ambitious on preferment, the peaceful seek nothing but the pleasures of a placid retreat.

The real disclosure of character is deeply interesting to society. We should be willing to credit the best of men; but let us at the same time look to their course of life, and render ourselves aware of their decided habits. We are liable to be imposed on by the artful insinuating themselves into our confidence; they feign corresponding tastes and propensities; we unite in their pursuits, we think them sincere, but they resume their preferences: we forget ourselves, we follow them, and are corrupted.

Artifice may preserve deception for a time, and

the hypocrite in his heart may be thought full of candour; but the mask at last falls off, and mankind unconsciously become their own betrayers. The character of one is not equivocal who is pleased with genius and learning applied to innocent purposes, who is merciful and courteous, who is considerate of the good, and rewards in prosperity those who befriended him in adversity.* But the disposition of that man is equivocal, who is sometimes mild and gentle, sometimes cruel and fierce, who professes devotion while he derides sanctity, and in decrying pleasure shews himself a sensualist.† The imperious sway of the passions often turns the scale, where the virtues and vices oscillate for preponderance.

All men being ultimately distinguished by their preferences, we discover that only a bad man can be guilty of bad actions; and that no man can be guilty of bad actions, who has vanquished his evil propensities, and delights in benevolence. No one who is temperate by nature and habit, who is meek and affectionate, an admirer of truth, and a lover of justice, will expose himself to shame, be harsh to his family, or injurious to his neighbours. He obeys his tastes and preferences; he feels no temptation to deviate from that ordinary course which has become habitual.

* *Sextus Aurelius Victor*, Epitome, cap. 48: Of Theodosius.

† *Vulcatius Gallicanus*, Avidius Cassius, cap. 10.

While the depraved are content with the vicious from participating of their own nature, the good will seek after those resembling themselves, whose congenial taste has enjoyment in delicate pleasure; who cultivate laudable pursuits and tranquil accomplishments; who indulge in the gratifications which can be reaped from their virtues.

The main object of existence being a happy life, the first and most anxious concern of mankind is, how it shall be obtained. But as true felicity concentrates only in the pacified soul, there can be no permanent satisfaction without the culture of those amiable qualities whereby the heart is embellished; for they alone can bring tranquillity. Though nature has evidently made ample provision for all the circumstances attendant on a solitary state, it cannot be admitted that we issue from her hands completely adapted for every diversity of the social condition, for therein subsists another world. Preparations for it must commence in a combat with ourselves; a long and energetic warfare has to be carried on against our appetites and passions; we have to accomplish the difficult task of overthrowing many secret propensities and solicitations, which urge the commission of actions unsuitable. Temperance is the earliest reward of victory. He who has removed himself from under the sway of his passions, soon comes to be protected by reason. It is not irksome to abstain from the pursuit of pleasure: he can re-

frain from active evil in wronging his neighbour, and from passive injury in dishonouring himself. The seeds of excellence are ripening to a glorious maturity. Nevertheless, the strongest must keep an anxious watch lest he be again surprised by the enemy, always lying in ambush. He has only been discarding what was originally incorporated with his system: therefore let no one trust in his victory too confidently; for though we sometimes outrage nature in apprehending greater inconvenience from compliance than resistance, she needs do nothing more to subjugate our resolves than to strengthen a new temptation. Greater progress seems to have been made in virtuous education, and a firmer bulwark reared against themselves by that portion of our race, resisting the fervour of those internal passions framed to conquer and heightened by the treacherous seductions of mankind, than by those who have no propensities, essential for important purposes, to obey.

The heart of the good man is read in his moral conduct. He knows the real value of fleeting time, to improve his mind and to govern his manners. His vigour is not enervated by the immoderate pursuit of pleasure; but learning to curb his passions, lest evil might come of indulgence, he partakes temperately of those enjoyments which the Creator has offered to the sensibilities of his frame. Integrity is assumed as an honourable guide: his candour is honest, his justice impartial; he de-

pises calumny, and abhors malevolence. Envy never disturbs his peace, because the world is wide; and he is courteous while humane, for he would make all mankind happy. Conscious of human imperfections, his mental faculties are enlarged by patient study; and feeling the extent of mortal imbecillities, he palliates error, and is forgiving of injury to himself, though ready to avenge it against others; he strives to rise superior to prejudice, and to banish pride: he arms himself with fortitude, as a preparation for worldly accidents; and, opposing resignation to calamity, he respects the affliction of others. His hatred of vice is testified by his preference of the worthy. He neither incorporates his felicity with transient objects, ever ready to perish, nor is greedy of existence when finding the day of his departure appointed. His piety to heaven appears in profound submission to the will of the Divinity; his benevolence to men, in friendly precept and pure example.

CHAPTER V.

THE CONDUCT OF MANKIND IN THEIR LAST MOMENTS.

BUT time rolls on. The bloom of beauty withers; the season of youth is passing away. All our fondest loves and cares are fading, vigorous manhood decays, and the warm flood of life is chilling in hoary age and decrepitude. An awful change is preparing to mingle us with the dust,—the earthly scene must close for ever.

Yet have not we been warned, that from the hour of birth our worldly permanence was shortening, that to-morrow would abridge it from to-day, that every moment it would decrease, and that the arrival of those events for which we languish most impatiently must bring us nearer and nearer to death? Our parents, those whom we embraced with love and veneration, were the first called away; our early friends have followed them; even as the floweret of the meadow falls, our children have been cut off in their prime, when full of enjoyments, and expecting they should never die. But all is transient and unstable. "O man, what is your life! It is even as a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."

From the planting of the tree, its perishable nature is hidden from us until we are awakened by its decay. The lapse of every fleeting hour is operating some alteration in our corporeal frame, leading in its progress towards dissolution. Already ought we to behold inevitable fate. Have not some of those innumerable parts performing the vital functions become deranged? Our grey hairs tell that our sojourn has been long: our dimming sight, our tottering limbs, announce their office to have been almost done. We loath at food; our passions, too, repose. We cannot tarry longer: standing on the brink of the grave, "there is but a step between us and death."

Let us devote the brief interval to meditation. The longest retrospect resembles a dream. Whence were those turbulent emotions storming within us, making sport of our reason, filling our soul with ardour, when things of weightier import have long since lost their charm, and move the mind no more? All the actors in our early fortunes have disappeared; and men have ceased to think of those who succeeded them. So shall we ourselves be soon forgotten. How many who celebrated the illustrious are now effaced from memory!* Posterity shall not know the name of heroes whose glory has resounded in the trumpet of fame: who benefited or disturbed the world, about whom history found the

* *Antoninus Meditationes*, lib. vii. § 6.

greatest occupation. They have dropped from the record, for all must perish.

But the world is ever full: no convulsion follows mortality; each generation is silently replaced, and though its corporeal substance vanishes its intellectual energies remain. Nature, through the means of incessant alternation, seems to preserve the uniformity of the universe eternally unimpaired.

Are not all things to-day the same in respect to each other as they were at the remotest period which history can reach? The rocks have whitened, the mountains are bare; lakes spread over the vallies, streams are tributary to the ocean, forests have deepened the soil in their decay, and new generations are fulfilling their appointed term. But how has the world grown old? The genial heat of summer strengthens the vernal evolutions, autumn matures the golden harvest, the hoary face of winter clothes the earth as it did in days of yore. Were not the features of mankind, and the fate of nations then, just as we behold them now? were not youth and beauty charming? were not friendship warm, and pledges true, ever since the human race endured? The same passions which actuate the busy host around us, were the impulse of our earliest progenitors, bringing them pleasure, or distracting their peace. The lover sighed for his mistress, the miser coveted riches, the ambitious were emulous of glory, profligates spurned the counsels of the wise, and the virtuous delighted in benevolence.—Good was intermixed with evil.—It is

not only now that the heavens are serene, and balmy zephyrs fill the air. Morning dawned, the bud unfolded, and its blossom was sweet. But it faded as evening came: the sun beamed on it no more. Thus has it been with man, and thus shall it ever be. Millions occupied the earth during the thousands of years that have slipped out of memory: millions awakened into existence as centuries after centuries succeeded them,—they followed pleasure, sought renown, held vice in abhorrence, or trampled on virtue. Where are they now? Mingled with the dust, dissipated in circumambient infinity, restored to the elements. The names of a few are cherished in ancient lore,—the rest, numberless as the grains of sand spread over the shores, are blotted out, never to be replaced in memory. So shall it be with us. An unfathomable gulf ever yawns beneath our feet,—the bitter cup will be offered; it must be taken to the dregs: it may not be put aside,—we, and all environing us, must die. Future ages, perhaps, shall learn, from some lifeless memorial, that once such beings have been: those who read it must also perish: it crumbles as they sleep; and while the retrospect becomes a total void, many shall tread the graves of those who have perturbed the world, without saying, “Who lies here?”

Let us cover ourselves with sackcloth and ashes: let us bow our heads, and humble ourselves to the dust. Vain mortals, swelling with empty pride!

whose voice so soon shall be stilled, whose remembrance so soon shall pass away, whose resistless destiny is hurrying them so fast towards oblivion!—Vain mortals, clinging to the fleeting joys of the day, as if a day could be counted in eternity!

Has the world grown old, or is it only life that is transient?

But if death seems of all things the most formidable, from believing it the boundary beyond which there is neither good nor evil,* it is awful chiefly because we have denied our consent to the conditions of existence: because we hold that to be permanent which every instant is receding from us, and refuse to part with what is but a temporary loan, seeing nature is always ready to recall it. Did we weigh the frailty of the tenure by which a place upon the earth is granted, we never should be unprepared to leave it, and cease to call that an evil which we have learned calmly to contemplate as inevitable.

Is existence the best allotment that can fall to mankind; do pleasures or pains predominate in our mortal system; should we not be spared many agonies if we could not feel; thence is it not sometimes misery to be compelled to live? Surely birth is not always to be hailed as a joyful event, nor is death to bear sorrow in its train. If it were better that we had never been born, it may be better for

* *Aristotle Ethici*, lib. iii. cap. 6.

us that we now shall die. Let not the survivors grieve that we are taken away ; for it is a real good which has befallen us, if permanence on earth would have been evil.

Reason and vicissitudes have already rendered the virtuous tranquil ; and now they cannot dread the separation of their ethereal portion from its corporeal tenement. The savage warrior tells his tormentors, that they dare not wound his vitals : the virtuous philosopher will behold the menace of his life without emotion ; he knows the approaching change, and in meditating how to die, the state of being dead will be to him of all men that which is the least terrible.*

Meantime that he assents undismayed to the will of fate, external observation and mental scrutiny disclose the perfect calm within. Placidity is the sole occupier of his breast. He is grateful to Providence for the favours showered upon him ; his moral duties have been discharged ; he has dwelt in peace with his fellows in so far as they would permit him ; he has promoted their comfort, and relieved their wants. Temperate and industrious, he has shewn that exemplary conduct which is the glory of the good, and tends to reclaim the bad. Confessing the imperfections incident to human nature, he has strove for their correction, and performed his part on the sublunary state as became

* *Plato in Phædone.*

one full of the love of well-doing. Were life to be renewed, his course would be repeated in the conviction that he has not voluntarily gone astray. Now he patiently beholds the separation of the elementary parts of his intellectual and corporeal frame as the necessary result of their having been united. His race is run. Amidst the regrets of surviving friends, the virtuous philosopher invoking Heaven for their felicity, is content to render up his spirit.

But how is it with the profligate on finding his summons to depart?—Guided by the wild tumult of passion, he has given a free rein to indulgence, and dishonoured himself in the eyes of mankind. Self-controul never restrained his appetites, the name of temperance was unknown to him; and as if the world had been made only to minister to his pleasures, their interruption aroused his vengeance. Beginning with rebellion to the authors of his being, he ends with domestic tyranny, and sports with the happiness of those to whom he has imparted life. He denies the obligations to sustain, to love, and to cherish, which are imposed by the ties of blood and natural duty. His protection never sheltered the weak; his friendships have been treacherous, his word deceitful; he laughed at human infirmities, and derided charity because sorrow required it. Envious of merit, truth found no favour in his eyes; his pestilential breath was loaded with detraction; he reaped enjoyment from malignity. Ferocious

in anger, implacable for offence, he has been cruel in resentment, and cowardly in retaliation; yet did he flourish. The aversion of the humble, he had the patronage of the great; the goods of fortune were lavished upon him; health and opulence swelled the arrogance of his soul; he presumed himself entitled to scorn virtue, and he plunged amidst iniquity. Now when the hour approaches that earthly things are to him no more, the retrospect is frightful. Conscience compels him to acknowledge, that none of his moral duties have been performed, that the precepts enjoining rectitude have been violated, that all for which existence was precious remains undone. But his error was not passive, he was active in evil; he has inflicted pain where he spurned benevolence; where, deaf to the widow, he injured the orphan; he has not solely neglected virtue, he has triumphed in vice. If forfeiting the claims for honour and justice, for mercy and compassion, he cannot hope benignity in his dying moments, or that he shall be allowed to repose in peace. He quakes in terror; loud reproaches rend his soul; remorse speaks the presence of guilt; hopes of pardon he has none. No regrets accompany him to the tomb; he perishes; he is forgotten; or if some fleeting incident revives his name, it is to be blotted by execration.

A virtuous life alone can promise a tranquil death.

Yet, although inevitable destiny be ever in anti-

cipation, and its approach before our eyes, that eventful moment which is to sunder us from existence can rarely arrive at last without bringing apprehension or sorrow along with it. Has prosperity so deeply incorporated us with the passing pleasures of life, as to have obliterated our consciousness of our perishable nature? Is it because the prospect of dissolution is so awful, that, recoiling as it advances, we strive to banish its image from the breast? If it would have been better to have remained in nonentity, surely our attachments to the world can be few: the more numerous our pains, we should be the readier to seek refuge from them; and the less ought we to grieve at quitting our sublunary state, the less our felicity is in it.* All the nations of the earth have not rejoiced in the birth of their children, nor have they lamented for the dead.† But that secret lingering after life, that horror of visible annihilation inherent to whatever has received the breath of animation, argues that, amidst their pains, the dispensations to mortals

* *Fuller*, Holy State, Book III. chap. 17.

† *Herodotus*, lib. v. § 4: The Trausi assembled to weep over the birth of a child, on account of the evils of the life into which it was ushered: But they celebrated funerals with joy, for the deceased was released from human calamities. A modern Persian tribe, the Bukhtiarees, rejoice instead of mourning at the obsequies of their countrymen, and especially if they have fallen in battle: *Morier*, Second Journey through Persia, p. 124, 125.

savour rather of good than evil, or that some important end is annexed to mere survivance.

Indulging deceitful hopes, we look for the best which may be given in human allotments : that because the aged have grown old, our existence shall be alike prolonged. Each individual contemplating only himself in detail, disregards the common fate befalling mankind ; and finding the term of expected survivance still deficient, he vainly presumes that its complement shall surely be assigned to him.

Because the pallid form of sickness, or struggles to escape inevitable peril, do not meet the eye ; because the ear is not rent by the loud din of battle, or the crackling of the conflagration smothers the groans of the dying, perhaps we never dream of danger, nor are discomposed by fear. Only the gradual decay of some venerable friend who has outlived himself, and now drops into eternity, is before us. But a terrible carnage, combating the replenishment of nature, continually pervades the globe, wasting life away in age and imbecillity. Midnight murders, bloody war, pestilence, and shipwreck, for ever sweep the world of millions.

After having been occupied with the busy passions and the active powers of men on this great theatre of mortality so long, it is time to employ a few brief remarks on the sensations arising when preparing for their eternal retreat. We shall thence become more familiar with the grand distinctions separating the mental and the corporeal part of the human system, and thereby better penetrate the

real constitution of that light aërial portion which as yet is clogged with its grosser terrestrial frame.

But, in respect to the dangers threatening destruction, the spectators are prone to be animated by other emotions than we who are liable to suffer may feel. Sent forth by our terrified countrymen to combat the enemies of our native soil, their eagerness divests ^{us} of their own apprehensions: if we shrink at that moment of peril which is ready to make nature shudder, their wrath becomes implacable, and they brand us with infamy.* Our age and infirmities seem intolerable to their witenesses; yet we fondly hope in their abatement, and that we shall still enjoy some portion of a happy life. Those surrounding us, like the children deeming it profitable for their parents to quit the world, may think we live too long, but we are reluctant to agree with them—and, spite of uncertain survivance of the distresses we have undergone, and the meagre comforts in store, we are prone to embellish the fading rays of expectation as promising something better.†

The close of existence being inevitable, behold-

* *Monro*, Expedition, Part ii. p. 69: "Before resolution, flesh and blood have their own disturbances, even in the most valorous." The author was an experienced soldier.

† *Sagard*, Voyage du Pays des Hurons, p. 275, 276: A troop of Indians, reduced to a state of famine, proposed to a person accompanying them, out of pure compassion, to dispatch him, as he could travel no farther. They put their aged parents and relations to death from the same principle.

ing the evanescence of animation, having the fate of others incessantly before our eyes, and conscious that it must be soon our own, to what can we refer the unconquerable dread of death? It seems to originate in the errors of education only. Do our preceptors allure the earliest buds of observation, and guide our understanding to the constitution of nature, and the harmonies of the universe? Are we told that we spring because our parents have sprung; that this terrestrial globe is a spot allotted for human felicity, where Divine benignity provides for the wants of every creature, teaches all instinctively to seek subsistence, to shun injury, and be careful of self-preservation; that it is good alone which is designed for mankind, though the susceptibilities of their system expose them to an intermixture with evil? Do those who try to fashion the youthful mind explain the natural purpose of life, and that death is its necessary termination; that if the mortal frame consist of matter, it cannot be of permanent duration; that dissolution is part of the arrangements on which creation must depend; that to perish and be decomposed is alone consistent with the laws confining sentient beings to determinate space? Thence, that disease, and age, and imbecillity, being a distressful condition, death ought to be calmly contemplated, and welcomed as a positive good? They do nothing of the kind.—Long antecedent to the opening of that capacity which shall determine fallacy or truth, the ductility of youthful imagination is led amidst sentiments

at that time the most incomprehensible. The world, which we are compelled to enter, is described as only a state of trial, wherein we are incessantly told to bewail the miseries of mortal life. Though environed by spontaneous profusion, we are to subdue our appetites, and subsist in self-denial: we are to refuse the innocent enjoyment of those temperate pleasures which better judgment proves to have been provided for our acceptance; we must humble the rebellion of the flesh by voluntary mortifications; and, notwithstanding our willingness to do well, we are to be always full of distrust, and remain in uncertainty of forgiveness or approbation. Our souls, we are reminded, have been doomed to eternal perdition, unless perchance we may help to redeem them, by adopting certain unintelligible principles which darken as they are expounded; for many others war against the preceptor endeavouring to enforce their truth. Death is represented as a punishment contrived against mankind, who would otherwise have lived for ever; denounced against those who know not right from wrong, who never sinned, who are incapable of error. It is pictured in the most frightful colours which a gloomy fancy can figure, as the undoubted testimony of divine indignation; and it is designed the greatest of evils that can befall the human race. If a natural and unavoidable evil be urged on the mind under such an aspect, is it not wonderful that a virtue like fortitude is found among us? If constantly allowed to droop in mourning; if taught to shrink from pain,

to dread the slightest dangers, how can we hope to learn courage? Resolution is impaired by disturbance of the reasoning faculties.

But it has been otherwise with the inhabitants of the Western hemisphere; and it would yet be so with all the human race, were a suitable view of that final moment which all must reach imparted.

Believing in the immutable arrangement of sublunary affairs, the Eastern nations hold it fruitless to struggle with destiny. Confident that enjoyments unfading await them in realms of bliss, they resolutely put existence in peril; for they shall sleep but a moment, to awaken to purer pleasures and a more congenial state. Bowing in passive humility to the divine decree, they meet death complacently.*

The ancient Europeans of the North were no less courageous and resigned: they went undaunted to face destruction, because they were taught to endure pain, and to despise danger: like the Easterns, they had the everlasting joys of paradise in expectation, which none but the spirits of the brave could enter; and lambent flames were believed to guard the tombs of their heroes from the touch of the profane, while their souls were reserved for a

* *Rogers, Concise Account of North America*, p. 217: The natives "represent the other world as a place abounding with an inexhaustible plenty of every thing desirable, and that they shall enjoy the most full and exquisite gratification of all their senses; and hence it is no doubt that the Indians meet death with such indifference and composure of mind."

happy immortality.* Those who fell in battle were the most welcome to the presence of Odin the god of war, and the first at the perpetual banquets in his palace, where a crowd of virgins filled their cups. "The goddesses of Destiny are come for me," sung the dying warrior: "Odin hath sent them from the habitation of the gods. I shall be joyfully received into the highest seat, and quaff full goblets among them."† Confidence in celestial recompence inspired the soldier with redoubled valour, and made him fearless in the fight. He gloried in his contempt of death. It was better to die than to be born; for birth was bewailed, while funereal rites were accompanied by rejoicing.‡

Early education not only taught the ancient Northerners derision of pain, and familiarity with scenes of peril; they held courage the property of man, and forbid the very expression of fear amidst the most pressing dangers. § Their disregard of life, added to contempt of death, kept them always prepared to die.

We try to reconcile ourselves to fate, in glowing pictures of an Elysium, to compensate us for

* *Bartholinus Antiquitates Danicæ*, p. 275. 317.

† *Regner Lodbrok*: Dying Song.

‡ *Olaus Magnus Gentium Septentrionalium Historia*, lib. iv. cap. 9: Puerperia luctu, funeraque festivo cantu celebrantur.

§ *Bartholinus Antiquitates Danicæ*, p. 3: Vir nemo Homburgi existeret qui timoris verbum protulerit vel quid apprehenderit, licet ad periculosissimum statum redactus fuerit.

being withdrawn from the present world : nay, its gates are to be opened to the wicked simply for confession of their iniquities with sorrow. Even the rude Indian conceives, that he shall rejoin his departed fathers in some distant region, far over the mountains forming the barrier of his country : Nor does the messenger of death disturb his composure. How weak and pusillanimous have we become ! We tremble at the slightest menace of indisposition, lest ultimately leading to that inevitable issue by which our earthly career shall be closed. But can it be otherwise ? Discourses of death as an evil are offered to terrify us into well-doing, not to fortify the mind. Lessons of fortitude form no part of our education ; we are never taught to be strong ; we are perpetually cautioned of danger, and danger perpetually reminds us of mortality. Thence are we always assailed by renewed alarms.

Surely those reposing the firmest confidence in the joys of futurity, should be the most eager for their participation, and the least reluctant to quit a world of sorrow for the purity of the celestial spheres. But we know not that the pious devotee, who has depicted paradise in the most inviting colours, is more willing to journey thither than those whose opinions waver on its existence. Many sincere and excellent persons, whose words are not addressed to the imagination of others, rely on finding everlasting happiness there ; yet, in respect to quitting the earth, no actual difference can be re-

cognised between them, and such as conceive that the soul and the body perish together : nor is more anxiety regarding the awful separation of the ethereal portion from the terrene mass testified by men esteemed atheists, than by those the most devout expecting immediate ascent of the soul to heaven.

Were it not for the errors of education, how should we be endow^d with lower fortitude than other nations? The perishable nature of living beings is alike before our eyes : we are incessantly warned of the transience of life : we smile at the impatience of the heir who longs for the departure of his ancestor, or the joy of our friend at the removal of his enemy : for posterity already tread on their heels. The ornaments of one will speedily adorn another : He who bewails the loss of those he loved will soon have a mourner himself.* Things are of wonderfully shortened endurance.

Deeply attached to the world by the pleasures of life, we cling the more firmly to it from terror of the pains of death. We shudder at their name and aspect,—words cannot make them more appalling,—our hearts sink within us. But are they truly so?—Is there truly so great a conflict in the vital principle striving for separation from the clay by which it is imprisoned?—We cannot comprehend their union ; all is mysterious and inscrutable here. Perhaps the powers of language have been deceit-

* *Antoninus Meditationes*, lib. x. § 34.

fully used to heighten our sensations regarding that which it is difficult to understand, if reflecting profoundly on it, and in describing those circumstances attending events which not many are often summoned to witness. Let us look to the dying criminal under the frightful apparatus of extermination. We sicken to behold his ghastly visage, his convulsive struggles fill us with nameless horror. Such, we say to ourselves, are the pangs of death in the divulsion of the body and the soul. Yet it is exceedingly doubtful whether these are the result of his sufferings, whether after the first instant of its infliction he is not altogether insensible of his punishment, and endures more than a momentary pang. The spectator forms another conclusion: it is rational to do so, for he assimilates tortures with convulsions, writhing with pain. But we know very well that the like, in a lower degree at least, is testified under little sensation; that there are certain involuntary and spasmodic affections of the animal frame entirely devoid of uneasiness; that an organ performing important functions may lose its faculties, wither, or die without impairing the rest, or even awakening our sensibilities to its decay. Numbers also who have been rescued from premature destruction, whose sense and feeling were extinct, in whom the vital spark, if latent, would have unconsciously fled by the shortest protraction, concur in affirming that their suffering was inconsiderable. But they likewise almost uniformly agree, that du-

ring the progress of resuscitation, it was great. Those who have trod the field of battle will tell indeed, that, according to the weapon by which the fallen have perished, such was the pain of dissolution; that agony is inseparable from death by steel. Perhaps the aspect of the dying may deceive them. The principle of life is as obscure in its subsistence as in its origination: the period of its suspension, without being totally obliterated, is uncertain; and it seems always ready to escape imperceptibly; for many have slept into eternity with a countenance unruffled and serene. Probably, therefore, an erroneous apprehension is entertained of the anguish associated with personal dissolution. The most exquisite tortures may be endured, even under aggravated renewal, without impairing the vital action, and repeated until the mutilated frame remains distorted for ever. Yet the lamp may be extinguished in an instant, or its flame expire in gradual evanescence, entirely free of pain. So "Tullius Marcellinus slowly weakened away, not without some sensation of pleasure he said, such as has been felt in swooning."* Thus also a celebrated physician, who had often witnessed the last moments of others, turned to a friend during his own, saying, "If I had strength to hold a pen, I would write how easy and how pleasing a thing it is to die."† It is

* *Seneca*, Epistola 77.

† *Simmon's Life and Writings of William Hunter, M.D.* p. 65.

not always that there is a forcible divulsion of the body and the soul,—they separate unknown to the spectator, who hearing no complaints, will often ask whether he is now beholding a placid slumber, or the hand of death.

Nevertheless, if the presence or absence of evil be a sensible condition, we cannot question the reality of excruciating agony in death, when wounds so slight as fever us with pain are compared to those tremendous lacerations rending the flesh as if about to let the spirit escape. Fortitude, the sense of dishonour, the influence of passion, may for the moment disguise the acutest suffering, or carry the exalted mind above confessing it; but mental or personal anguish is too truly a real, not an imaginary sensation, though we will not acknowledge that it is so. Bound to the stake, where he knows he must perish, the Canadian savage mingles the narrative of his exploits with his death-song; he defies the threats of his enemies; he reviles them amidst his torments; and, instead of consuming his last moments in feminine regrets, in groans and lamentations, he tries to provoke their higher exasperation, by recounting his own barbarities to their kindred, while he is himself suffering those that in bare description make human nature shudder.*

* *Lery*, *Navigations en Brasiliam*, cap. 15: "The captive led out to suffer, shows no dread of death; he surpasses his captors in dancing, in drinking, and merriment: and tells them how many of their countrymen he has slain and devoured."

LAST MOMENTS OF MANKIND.

Thus can the mind be brought at last to an utter contempt of that which is regarded by the multitude as the greatest and most intolerable evil. Yet is not pain the less a true sensation.

Notwithstanding the inherent love of life, which teaches all animated nature to avoid injury, the apprehension of pain and the dread of death, misfortune or disease, or a weariness of the world, can wean mankind from sublunary attachments; and some, as we have seen, hasten to plunge wilfully into eternity. Scipio preferred the preparation of his own funeral pile to languishing under an incurable malady: Hannibal swallowed poison to preserve himself from the Romans: Lucretia pierced her heart, because she was dishonoured. It is only in the ultimate predominance of good that there can be real felicity, in so far as is evident to reason; but in the predominance of evil, the purposes of that existence belonging to a worldly condition seem to have passed away; for the main design of nature, as demonstrated, for the welfare of her children, is pleasure. We suffer, perhaps it is for some grand object unseen and unknown: but this is an intermediate stage, which is unaccountable to us, and which we are impatient to quit, for we cannot comprehend the advantages derived from torment. Thus may protracted distresses abate our interest in life, and make men regardless of it; while revived to the sweets of existence by their cessation, they no longer seek the post of peril, like

the soldier of Antigonus when cured of his infirmity.* Why should we abandon the innocent joys that constitute the charms of life, and render the world desirable? or, why should we ardently wish to hold by that which brings pleasure no more? Who would remain willingly on the rack, or be content to retain what is anguish to the body and misery to the soul, if he can easily purchase remission, and lawfully free himself of evil? Saul implored the aid of his armour-bearer to preserve him, by death, from the scorn of his enemies: Brutus solicited the friend of his youth to aid him in suicide. They perished, because their hopes had perished before them—their worldly affairs were desperate. But the dread of death conspires towards the preservation of life, though hateful. Lingerings prospects of better fortune arrest the sanguinary arm uplifted against ourselves; whence do myriads drop from existence in natural progress, who might otherwise have prematurely forsaken it. The vanquished soldier awaits the fate of the battle, though he might rush on the weapon of his foe; the sailor awaits the foundering of his bark, though he might sooner close his terrors by plunging amidst the flood.

As there is a universal concurrence in human

* *Plutarch* in vita Pelopidæ: "You, Sir," said he to the King, "have rendered me less bold, by delivering me from that misery which made life of no account to me."

nature modified by constitution, habits, or education, perhaps approaching dissolution is beheld under a similar aspect; and thence the screams of terror, the ravings of despair, or the silent and sullen meditation of sorrow when destruction hovers over the devoted head of mankind.

If under transient impressions, remediable casualties, or the mutabilities of fortune, often of little avail, the keenest sensations or the loudest passions agitate the frame, shall it be expected that all are to be lulled in tranquillity during our waning moments, when the final and most trying scene of life is opened, and opened just to be closed for ever?—Shall not the dire internal conflict betray its busy contentions to the light?—Trembling with the fear of pain, lingering yet after that only world which is known to mortals, beholding death's grim visage so horrid and terrific, and deemed so distant as the prosperous tide was flowing,—can impending dissolution be otherwise than appalling?—Though the miserable invoke God to remove them from their torments, so warm is their attachment to life, that the first moment of respite they hasten to recall their words. The airy form of hope is ever fluttering amidst our troubled visions. Perhaps some auspicious alteration, perhaps some providential interference, some happy relief, may be our preservation. We pause over the prospect: But the die is cast—dark and gloomy presages overwhelm the soul. We must consent to be torn from hence, the theatre of all our comforts and delights: sun-

dered from our beloved kindred, whose fond caresses endear us to existence. Farewell to that angelic beauty, that grace and softness which filled the breast with pleasure; farewell to the charms of friendship, to the gladdening, gay, and social throng, whose mirthful presence enlivened all the circling hours in joy and harmony. Our spirit floats on the wind. Our earthly ties are washed into the waters of forgetfulness—dissolved in eternity. O dismal night!—night everlasting—dull—cheerless—wrapt in silence interminable!

Living nature recoils from the bitter potion, and contemplates the frightful change with horror; but a few fleeting moments never to return, and the genial flow now swelling our fervid veins shall stagnate in its course; sunk in the deep tomb, we shall mingle with decaying corpses, and moulder into our native dust.

Yet, O precious boon of heaven—the soul is not to be thus subdued! Another scene awakens upon it to promise peace.

When fate becomes inevitable, when the flurry, perturbation, and dread of death, have for some time distracted their unhappy victims, commonly they subside, and the supervening interval is occupied by different and sometimes consolatory sensations. They make atonement to Omnipotence for wilful or involuntary error; they recall the remembrance of those dearest to them, dwelling on the separation, rejoicing that they shall be again united,

they are solicitous for the approbation of posterity, and desire in their last moments that they shall appear as respectable as circumstances may admit. Such are the transient sentiments usurping the place of all others in the majority of mankind; and although the mind of one who feels the first attack of mortal disease, like the soldier struck in battle, is bewildered, his agitation at length subsides, and, by means of fortitude, ...at high prerogative gifted to the human race, he is enabled to suffer with resignation.

Examining the conduct of mankind in their latest moments, we find the same analogies exhibited as during the preceding part of life; not indeed that their wonted habits are invariably represented in this final tragedy, but as identifying that correspondence universally subsisting in the mental constitution wherever sentient beings exist. Their demeanour may now be classified for the most part as pusillanimous, courageous, or resigned. Some testify total apathy, some are facetious, and others expire while uttering execrations; a few are earnest to perish. But in endeavouring to reach the true and unaffected sensations which then are occupying the breast, we must not take the faculties of those whom sickness has enfeebled, or whose intellectual energies distress or disappointments have impaired. Let us look to mankind, if they shall be found, who, brought to so dire a crisis, amidst health and prosperity, and the enjoy-

ments of the world, can justly appreciate their own condition.

Is it not natural to conclude, that the first class, the pusillanimous, that is, those wanting fortitude to meet what has always inspired terror, should be the most comprehensive? But probably it is the resigned. As some are eager, through their own intervention, to quit the world; so are some content, by the ordinary course of destiny, to die, after having had all their desires fulfilled, or who knew not to wander beyond the narrowest sphere of enjoyment. They never expected more; they languish no longer after an abode where their farthest stay can be compared to only a moment of permanence.—During a fever which raged amongst the inhabitants of the suburbs of Paris, a venerable priest found a victim of the contagion, an old man, in a kind of subterraneous stable. He lay amidst rags in solitude, covered with a bag of straw, but without even a chair, or any wreck of furniture; for he had sold every thing at the commencement of his distemper, to procure subsistence; and on the walls hung only two saws and a hatchet. These were all his fortune when he could work, but now they fell from his hands. “Courage, my friend,” said the confessor; “God is about to shew you favour to-day, for you will leave a world where you have known nothing but troubles.” “What troubles?” answered the dying man with a feeble voice: “You are mistaken: I have lived very content: nor have

I ever complained of my lot : I have not experienced either envy or hatred : my sleep was tranquil ; I laboured through the day, but during the night I enjoyed repose. These tools before you procured me bread which I ate with pleasure, and I never was jealous of the tables which came within my view. I have seen that the rich man was more liable than any other to disease. I was poor, but my health was sound until now. Should I recover it, which I do not expect, I shall return to my work, and I shall continue to bless the hand of Providence, which, until the present moment, has protected me." " My son," resumed the comforter, " although this life has not been painful, you ought to be ready to quit it, for we must submit to the will of Heaven." " Doubtless," replied the dying man, in a firm tone, " all the world must pass away in its turn. I have known how to live, I shall know how to die : God be praised for having given me life ; and for closing my days, that I may join him. I feel the moment—it has come—father, adieu !"*

But some of those rude nations, educated in a kind of fortitude to which we can never pretend, testify no regrets on parting with the world ; they are prepared to meet every alternation of fate with indifference or equanimity. It is written, that of old the Indians, " when assailed by age and disease, retired apart from the rest, and patiently awaited

* *Mercier* Tableau de Paris, tom. iii. p. 187.

dissolution.”* They were content to die. So it is said of the modern Caffres in southern Africa, that the sufferers seem quite indifferent about death, and the spectators seem as indifferent as the dying: and of the North American prisoner, uncertain whether a few hours may not close his life in excruciating torments, that “he never loses a moment’s sleep on this account.”† What an enviable texture of mind! what a happy compliance with the will of destiny! to consent without repining, to renounce that which in its origin nature has declared may be speedily taken away.

Habitual reflection on things or subjects subsisting, wears off the impressions of novelty; and habitual contemplation of what ought to follow, diminishes the alarm concomitant on arrival of unexpected events. We dread the gathering of the storm, from the evil which we may suffer from it: if we do not dread the evil, we do not dread the storm. Surprise induces terror, for we start at the flash of the lightning, and tremble as the thunder rolls among the clouds, though witnessing both unconcerned if calmly awaiting their occurrence. If we can resolve to fortify the mind against the fear of death, and hold it as a necessary and unavoidable condition to human existence, and above all, if believing that it opens the way to a happier state,

* *Pomponius Mela*, lib. iii. cap. 7.

† *Campbell*, *Travels in Southern Africa*, p. 516. *Rogers*, *Account of North America*, p. 212.

shall not we cease to be disturbed either by its distant prospect, or its speedy arrival?

Timidity is often converted to resignation. The dread of death is called a passion of the vulgar only, and the companion of the weak, while a small portion of consideration will enable us to rise above it.* The strongest in other things, however, are not invariably the strongest here. Nor is courage alike demonstrated in contempt for every form of death :† for some who have braved destruction a thousand times in the field, and were willing to meet an honourable fate, have shown greater reluctance to quit the world than many of the weakest who never knew danger. The Marshal de Biron, who had bled profusely in the service of his country, who was ever in the brunt of the battle, and had covered himself with immortal glory, having been convicted of a conspiracy against the Monarch whose cause he had espoused, testified more agitation at last than the timorous always careful of personal exposure.‡ Other examples of military men of the

* *Deslandes* Reflexions, p. 24. *Senault* L'Usage de Passions, Part i. Tr. 1. Disc. 4. p. 32.

† *Aristotle* Ethici, lib. iii. cap. 6.

‡ *Sully*, *Memoires*, liv. 13: "The gusts of passion, the weakness and pusillanimity manifested at the hour of execution by this man, who had acquired the reputation of intrepidity amidst the greatest dangers of war, afforded infinite matter for conversation, and apparently will not be forgot by historians." *Mezeray*, tom. iii. p. 1248.

same nation are said to have occurred in later times, which it is ungrateful to record ; for that country has been far from deficient in valour—and it is cruel if report has wronged them. General Custine in 1793, and General Mouton-Duvernet in 1816, are alleged to have been forsaken by that courage in their last moments, which had embellished their preceding career.

A small proportion of mankind, suffering by violence, die with execrations ; but generally they are only the most abandoned of criminals. There are others, however, of a different description, who then offer furious invectives against the authors or the instruments of their fate, and impatiently submit to punishment. The Marshal de Biron, who had not been present at the passing of his sentence, exclaimed on seeing the Chancellor cross the court of the Bastille, “My God, I am a dead man! O, what injustice, that an innocent person should be destroyed! My Lord Chancellor, my Lord Chancellor, do you come with my death warrant? Is there no pardon—no mercy?” He spoke of what he had merited, but his vehemence scarcely permitted any reply ; and after the Chancellor had signified how unsuitable intemperance was to the occasion, and his own sense of his deserts, he resumed: “Is it possible the king can forget my services? can he forget the siege of Amiens, where I was so often involved in the enemy’s fire, and in the heart of so many dangers? there is not a vein in my

body, but has bled in his cause. My father exposed himself to a thousand perils, to place the crown on his head: I have myself suffered thirty-five wounds to keep it there: yet all my recompence is to have my own head struck from my shoulders." The Marshal was transported with rage—he refused the aid of the attendant ministers of religion: he swore he would strangle the executioner, if he dared to touch him: and, by his violence, terrified every one within his reach. He dashed his hat on the ground, cast away his handkerchief, and tossed his cloak to a spectator. He three times successively covered his eyes, and thrice tore off the bandage: knelt to the block, and as often rose again with furious gusts of passion. But being at length persuaded to offer an invocation to Heaven, his fate was stolen upon him unawares rather than by consent; and the fatal blow so dexterously given, as to leave the last word still audibly escaping from his lips as his head rolled on the scaffold.*

Some have anxiously retarded the final moment; all is not yet said or done; but some accelerate their doom. "Ah, what now avails the pomp and splendour surrounding me!" cried the unfortunate Gustavus III. to his physician when despairing

* *Matthieu Histoire de France*, tom. ii. p. 523—533: Although two days respite were given to the Marshal, it appears that on sentence pronounced, the culprit was immediately delivered over to the public officers of punishment, in ordinary cases.

of safety; "willingly would I exchange condition with the poorest healthy young cottager in Sweden. Say, can you not procure me, by your art, a short respite? can nothing avert the blow for three short days? I ask no more. I have, alas! some painful matters yet to arrange." * The hand of destiny was irreversibly upon him.—An Albanian soldier, being lately condemned to suffer for an offence, complained thus to his guard when about half way to the appointed spot; "Do you wish me to travel half a league farther in the hottest part of the day?" and passing a large fig tree, he requested them to take that opportunity of terminating his existence. They assented.†—"I hear say that I shall not die afore noon," observed Queen Anne Boleyn to the keeper of the Tower; "and I am very sorry therefore, for I thought to be dead by this time, and past my pain." ‡

If absolute indifference is shown by some, a wanton levity is testified by others, and men have been even jocular when about to quit the world. Petronius Arbiter "addressed no serious discourse to his friends," he rather manifested a capricious demeanour.§ "Chrysippus writes, that a certain jester being

* *Brown, Northern Courts*, vol. ii. p. 197.

† *Vaudoucourt, Memoirs on the Ionian Islands*, p. 319. This author witnessed the fact.

‡ *Burnet, History of the Reformation*, Part I. Book iii. ad an. 1536.

§ *Tacitus Annales*, lib. xiii. cap. 19.

about to suffer death, he said, that, like the swan, he wished to die singing; which, being permitted, he began to indulge in jests and invectives.* It is alleged of the celebrated Sir Thomas More, that his resolute spirit enabled him to be jocular while ascending the scaffold and kneeling to the block. Brantome relates, that in the first year of Charles IX. one brought to justice for robbing the Prince de la Roche sur Yon, requested a little time on the ladder to speak to the people. He remonstrated that he suffered wrongfully; "for," says he, "I never committed any robberies on the poor, but on princes and the great, who are greater robbers than we, and pillage us daily; and it is right to take back what they have deprived us of." The priest desiring the prayers of the spectators for the culprit, he began to mock him, and with a kick sent him to the bottom of the ladder, whereby one of his limbs was broke, while he laughed heartily at the exploit, and then cast himself off. "I assure you," continues the author, "that the court were very much diverted by this story."†

But of all things the most unsuitable seems pleasantry, when men, whatever be their views of things present or to come, should be most serious. The Northerners, indeed, made a frequent boast that their heroes died laughing, whereby was inferred their

* *Athenæus*, lib. xiv. cap. 6.

† *Brantome Œuvres*, tom. iii. p. 509.

invincible courage, and that they did not repine at the fate conducting them to a better world. The early Christians, amidst the persecution of their enemies, advanced with cheerfulness, and while singing hymns, to meet their destiny.* But the like has been held rather as a token of mental alienation than a testimony of composure; for Strabo designs it "an instance of Cantabrian frenzy, that some captives sung a hymn when they were crucified."† Certain it is, however, that during the melancholy convulsions of the neighbouring country in later years of the preceding century, while many frantic republicans vociferously celebrated the praises of their ideal goddess in the prisons which their political delirium had opened for others than themselves, some more virtuous and enjoying a better frame of mind, were desirous of evincing in this manner a supernatural fortitude. At Lyons, a place of reiterated sanguinary scenes, "most of the prisoners went to death singing:" At Paris, then the theatre of all iniquity, some, about to ascend the scaffold where the sacrifice was offering of their dearest friends and relatives, were known to sing an air of an opera until their own turn arrived.

The Emperor Adrian, an hour preceding his decease, composed several verses indicating his

* *Eusebius Historia Ecclesiastica*, lib. viii. cap. 9.

† *Strabo*, lib. iii. tom. i. p. 251.

doubts on the subject of futurity.* But Angelus Politianus is said to have written a song in praise of a young Grecian, amidst the violence of a fever, and rising, performed it in a pathetic manner on his lute until he expired.† One of the maids of honour to Queen Catherine, Brantome says, ordered an attendant to play a certain air on an instrument, which she endeavoured to accompany with her voice, until coming to the passage "All is lost," which having twice repeated, she turned her face to those present and expired.‡ Many analogies to the feelings and propensities of mankind in their happiest moments, perhaps will be found as existence closes.

Setting aside all peculiarities, all the desire of observation for the sake of posthumous fame, or those irresistible habits which become incorporated with our being, the class of the courageous is large, from that wonderful provision of nature in favour of human weakness; and some brave men have been affected more by the apprehension of seeming deficiency in fortitude, than by the certainty of death. Sir Walter Raleigh prefaced a speech to the spectators of his execution with these words: "I desire to be borne withal, for this is the third day of my fever; and if I

* *Ælius Spartianus in vita Hadriani.*

† *Reflections on the Death of Free-Thinkers*, p. 43.

‡ *Brantome Œuvres*, tom. iii. p. 507.

shall shew any weakness, I beseech you to attribute it to my malady, for this is the hour in which it is wont to come." This great man was alarmed lest a periodical disease, contracted from his long and unjust confinement, might be mistaken for indications of inconsistency, or of declining courage. His most ardent desire was to preserve the reputation of his latest moments unsullied. Many have been impressed with a corresponding anxiety, especially where the multitude was to be the witness. Viscount Stafford was condemned in the year 1680 for treason, or perhaps, like others, to satisfy the power predominant, which of old, and it may be in more modern times, could easily procure such convictions. Being urged to protect himself from the rigour of the weather on quitting the Tower of London to undergo his sentence, he acquiesced; "for I may perhaps shake for cold," said he, "but I trust in God never for fear."* Under still more trying and hopeless circumstances was the magnanimity of M. Bailly, the celebrated French astronomer, displayed, as many who yet survive have testified. Forsaking the calm, unruffled, and secure retreats of scientific life, whereby he had acquired deserved renown, M. Bailly adventured amidst that inextricable maze of political embarrassment which had utterly confounded the wisest of his nation. By lending a willing ear to their extravagant de-

* *Dying Speeches of State Prisoners*, p. 353.

mands, he became the idol of the people, and his name was inscribed as one of their deliverers on pillars of stone. But popular applause is a fleeting favour, and the commotion of the multitude resembles a raging sea. M. Bailly, who had been borne up on the highest billows, sunk as they fell, and from an object of love became the victim of hatred and of persecution. Discovering his error when too late, he sought safety in retreating to the tranquillity of his original studies. But his enemies had doomed him to perdition: he was dragged forth from his retirement, and condemned as hostile to a state which had no government. Trial at that time was scarcely an essential formality. Bailly was still a philosopher: he suffered the utmost indignities without complaint. That infuriated rabble, so lately eulogising him to the skies, and so soon thirsting for his blood, offered him all the insult and derision by which they hoped to embitter his dying moments. He was loaded with the very instruments of execution, compelled to a weary progress under them, and the scene of it barbarously prolonged amidst the rigours of the most inclement season. In this interval some sanguinary wretch exclaimed, "Bailly, you tremble!" "Yes," replied he calmly, "but it is not with fear." —How cruel are mankind, when they can wound their fellows with impunity! Fierce, savage, unrelenting, it is not enough to render the victim miserable; they desire to aggravate his misery. Those who would arm the multitude with power, should know

that it is only example which can profit, and restraint which can oppose the flood of flagrant outrage and immorality. Society has not yet attained that purity where, amidst vast accumulations, the good predominate greatly over the bad, or where the bad will not be mischievous, having no consequences to dread or apprehensions to deter them. Which is the country, where the diffusion of liberty, and its widest enjoyment, has permitted dispensation with penal statutes? Bailly, the ornament of his nation, and the regret of science, perished in the year 1793, from the abuse of that revolt which he at first promoted, and which amply proved the incapacity of mortals to govern themselves by the influence of their passions.

The person, it has been said, may be degraded by indignities, because human imbecillity is liable to be overcome; but the mind is in our own custody, it belongs to ourselves to soar above the reach of insult. So have the magnanimous been undisturbed until beyond the evils of the world. Unprincipled barbarians alone can exult over the defenceless or the vanquished, who testify their unconquerable virtue spite of the cruelty of men. Major André, a British officer, having been taken prisoner by the American insurgents, and condemned by a sentence which was not exacted by the rules of warfare or the principles of justice, solicited no other indulgence than that the honourable death of a soldier might be reserved for him. Being led to the

fatal spot through the line of hostile troops filled with admiration at his intrepidity, he discovered that even this poor favour had been denied. "He then requested that all around would bear witness that he died like a brave man," and perished as boldly as he had fought the battles of his country :* *adeo sicuti in hostem, ita et in mortem invictus animus fuit.*†

Although some denominate courage merely a mechanical virtue, or a defective and doubtful quality when taken by itself, it is a property of all others the most enviable by the timid ;‡ and although what has been most frequently urged on observation, is that hardy spirit acquired amidst the toils and dangers of war, which perhaps contribute nearly as much to ferocity as to contempt of peril, the mind is invigorated by personal exposure. The causes of alarm, accompanied by danger, without suffering are despised from frequency, and at length we hold menaces of no account. Thus the inhabitants of cities besieged, who at first concealed themselves in terror, think less of the missile engines of the enemy rolling in their streets, or bursting around them when issuing from their retreat, and talk of the casualties thence ensuing as if it were of friends cut off by malignant distempers. So does

* *Smith*, Narrative of the Death of Major André, p. 167.

† *Justin*, lib. xii. c. 15.

‡ *Aristotle* Politic. lib. v. cap. 4.

the hardy mariner prepare to meet the tempest he has often met, and while our soul sinks within us, he hears the roaring of the ocean as indifferently as we listen to the summer's breeze. Valour, however, though certainly not always at command, is held to be so intimately incorporated with the very system of the soldier, that some affect to regard the tranquil end of the philosopher resigning himself to fate, as more glorious than the death of him who dies in battle.* There are many brave men who confess they were courageous because they did not dread danger; nor do the most valiant always view it with contempt; rather let it be said, that with a noble mind they reconcile themselves to the circumstances under which their duty must be performed. Some, whose career was nearly run, have wilfully exposed themselves, that they might have an opportunity of dying honourably.† Some have been brave in battle by looking forward only to victory; and thus are many courageous in their last moments, from overpassing the event to take a view still more distant.

Warriors, nobles, and statesmen, almost invariably meet their fate with magnanimity, in whatever shape it overtakes them, whether on the one part from having been familiar with scenes of destruction, whether on the other from the natural or ac-

* *Deslandes, Reflexions*, p. 31.

† Marshal Villars, a brave and successful General in the reign of Louis XIV. acknowledged this to be his motive.

quired dignity by which they are not then furnished. But no less distinguished is the tranquillity of philosophers, whose mind is elevated by having surveyed the measureless magnitude of the creation, or having probed the recesses of human nature. They have sunk unconcernedly into the arms of death.* Seneca discoursed freely while the blood was flowing from his veins; Socrates received the poisoned cup complacently from the hand appointed to offer it. Persecuted for religion, a cause which has undermined the safety of the best, and enabled the wicked to bring them to ruin, Socrates was condemned by the Athenians, but remanded to prison for about thirty days, until the return of a vessel sent with offerings to the temple of Apollo in Delos. The period for his execution having at length arrived, many of his friends repaired to him, and a long and interesting conversation followed, which was chiefly directed to the immortality of the soul. "Do not think that death is any thing," said he, "but the liberation of the soul from the body." All were full of admiration at the magnanimity of his sentiments, and his placid deportment

* *Deslandes, Reflexions*, p. 31: "I am not at all affected by the image of those warriors who had dared all perils without reflection. I am much more pleasingly touched with contemplating a philosopher, who calmly sees the approach of death, and falls unconcernedly into its arms." *Reflections on the Death of Free-Thinkers*, p. 42: "Indolence and unconcernedness becomes those best who part with life."

while bitterly bewailing his fate ; for which he reproved them, saying, " Why such conduct ? I have heard that joy and propitious omens should prevail at death ; pacify yourselves and be strong." His friends blushed at their own weakness. Socrates retired to bathe, for it was now near the setting of the sun ; and having returned, little passed afterwards, as the servant of the magistrates came in, who standing near him, spoke thus. " I do not remark the same in you, Socrates, that I have seen in others : I mean that they were angry, and reviled me when my masters compelled me to announce to them that they must drink the poison. On the contrary, I find you generous and mild, and the best of all who ever came into this place ; therefore I know that you are not angry with me, but with the authors of your present condition." Socrates now conceived it time to swallow the fatal draught, though Crito his friend reminded him that the sun still hung over the mountains ; nor was it lawful to compel his departure, until he sunk below the horizon. Yet the philosopher thinking it absurd to seem desirous of life when drawing so near a close, Crito assented, and the executioner, after some delay, brought the poison suitably prepared in a cup. Looking at him, Socrates said, " It is well, my friend ; but what should be done, for you are skilful in this matter ?"—" Nothing else," replied the man, " than to walk about, after having drank the potion, until you feel a weight in your legs, and then lie down ;" and at the same time he reached forth the poison

to Socrates, which he swallowed cheerfully, gazing stedfastly on him, and without any discomposure. Again reproving the lamentations which burst from his friends, and desiring them to wipe away their tears, he recommended to them to testify more becoming fortitude; for all except himself were affected by the scene. But when he observed that his legs felt heavy as he walked, his friends laid him down in a supine position, and the executioner touched him at intervals. After pressing his foot hard, he asked him if he was sensible of it; and on his answering in the negative, he pressed him upwards, shewing the spectators that the parts were cold and stiff. Socrates also touched himself, saying, when the poison reached his heart he would depart. Soon afterwards the executioner covered him, and his eyes having become fixed, he expired.*

We shall not enter widely on the too ample field of shipwreck or conflagration, nor on those sudden and awful elementary convulsions of nature, the readiest to stagger human reason and terrify the soul:—Can the perception of the participators, though escaping with life, be entire? Neither shall the few remaining pages be chiefly occupied in war-like contests rousing the fiercest passions, nor with narratives of those who slip in myriads from the world unheeded, unless by the sorrowing relatives around them. It seems infinitely more imposing to behold the coolness and resolution, the collected

* *Plato in Phædon.*

and manly deportment of those compelled to suffer in sight of the multitude, than of mankind whose blood boils for vengeance,—of those condemned to perish unseen, or where the progress of disease extinguishes the lamp of life on a pillow. How many address the spectators as eloquently, and in as firm a tone, as if it were justifying themselves in private argument, or confessing their errors to their friends? How many declare their principles unshaken, that they cheerfully die in the cause of their sovereign, their religion, or of liberty? But many there are also, who, wanting the consolations of virtue, appear desirous of making atonement by deploring their past conduct; and anxiously caution the heedless to take warning by the example before them, and shun the seductive path of vice. Some illustrious persons, unjustly brought to the scaffold in Britain, have sought to inspect the weapon which was about to bereave them of existence. When Lord Capel, a loyal nobleman, sacrificed by the regicides for his attachment to Charles I. prepared to rest on the block, he said to the executioner, “Wast thou the man that cut off the King my master’s head?”—“Yes, God forgive me,” the executioner answered.—The noble victim, taking the deadly instrument from his hand and kissing it, exclaimed, “and, sirrah, wert thou not afraid!”* Such is the confidence inspired by the consciousness of recti-

* *Trial of Twenty-nine Regicides*, p. 136.

tude. Then kneeling, he submitted himself to the fatal blow. The words of the dying command attention when all other persuasion has failed, and they leave the deepest impression on the survivors: they are held as testimony inviolable, offered from the brink of eternity.*

Mutual commiseration is then awakened, whence some are desirous of obtaining a memorial of those who justify themselves, who are beloved and venerated, and who are esteemed innocent. The early Christians dipped their handkerchiefs in the blood of the martyrs,—a custom perpetuated almost to the present times. Several persons did so at the death of the Duke of Somerset, protector of England in 1552; and of Lord Stafford, who was beheaded on Towerhill in 1680. It was seen at the death of Louis XVI. in the year 1793; and during the Vendean insurrection of 1796 at Vannes, “where every day priests were led to the scaffold, and every day also old women and young peasants went to bedew their handkerchiefs in their blood.” When the Marshal de Thoiras, a French nobleman of distinguished reputation, fell before a fortress in the year 1636, the soldiers did the same, believing that such a relic would lead them to victory: And it is yet recent in memory, that when Marshal Ney suffered

* *Cantemir*, History of the Othman Empire, p. 197: The words of a dying man are esteemed by the Turks more than equivalent to the evidence of forty witnesses.

in 1815, for forsaking the allegiance he had offered to the dynasty restored, several officers and soldiers followed their example, as a token of veneration for his character.

We speak of the courage of men ; but we could occupy a long detail with their pusillanimity. If unconquerable fortitude be required in such trying circumstances by the strongest, shall we be surprised if weak woman, condemned to an ignominious fate, held forth as a spectacle to the rude assembly, should cry for mercy? or, dreading the pain of death, should shrink from the impending blow?

Yet, wonderful to repeat, such is the merciful dispensation of Heaven, such is the divine guardianship of the afflicted, that women, amidst these awful extremities, testify no less resolution than distinguishes the bravest of men. Is it fire, is it shipwreck, is it the oppression of tyranny or injustice? They submit to their doom with equal intrepidity, and often with greater resignation. Shall we look to the East, and behold the disconsolate widow ascending the funeral pile of her husband with joyful alacrity, that their souls may wing their way together to paradise? Shall we turn to the West, and see the daughter cling to the knees of her fond father, embrace her beloved brother, rather comforting than being comforted, while the howling tempest is opening the deeps of the merciless ocean to receive them?—scenes too often rending our hearts, and filling the children of our native soil

with mourning. Whether cut off from the roseate joys of youth by fate inevitable—whether compelled to drink the bitter potion, or spontaneously seeking an asylum from sorrow—woman—weak woman is then as strong and as resolute as any class of men. Meekness, humility, patience, and resignation, all contribute to embellish her dying moments.

We should be perplexed in selecting examples of female heroism from modern history, they throng so abundantly upon us: returning to the record of the ancients, it seems to transcend the possibility of admitting a parallel. If the wife of Panteus, who beheld the cruel destruction of her children and other females of her household, could yet preserve sufficient courage to wind up their bodies, pay them the last offices, and then bare her own breast to the poniard, she scarcely excelled the composure of many who have been obliged to yield to a corresponding destiny.* How dignified was Mary Queen of Scotland! how patient and courageous Queen Anne Boleyn! Lady Jane Grey only desired that her sufferings might be quickly ended. Elizabeth of France was content, without repining, to perish the last of twenty-four unhappy comrades in death. At this awful period, when the earth seemed to be delivered into the hands of the wicked, the most tender and delicate females vied for renown with the heroes of antiquity; none shed a

* *Plutarch in vita Cleomenia.*

tear themselves, they dried up the tears of others. "What, you a man to weep!" exclaimed the Countess de Malessy to an aged person bewailing the doom he had received along with her: "I have no less cause than you for affliction—I am the mother of a family—I am about to be torn from my children. Behold my father, my mother, my sister, who are to share the fate appointed for myself. But an event which will unite me to them for ever, which will carry us all to an abode where we shall soon be rejoined by those we love never to part again, must not be deplored." While this intrepid woman uttered these words, many unfortunate beings who also awaited death, listening with avidity, crowded around her. She spoke with such force, and such a charm of the eternal felicity which would crown the sacrifice of their mortal life, as opened their eyes to futurity, so that all shewed themselves jealous of imitating her example. The old man wiped away his tears, and regarding her as an angel of heaven sent to console his dying moments, blessed her in the fervour with which she had filled his soul.

Man, proud man, therefore cannot claim pre-eminence over his weaker help-mate, when both are brought amidst inevitable peril.

Resuming a view of the conduct of those under different circumstances, it appears that almost all who suffer a violent death for political offences, endeavour to justify themselves, especially if having acted from

deliberation ; and some there are who perish with nameless intrepidity. But this has been especially seen in the military officers, who were proud of their loyalty, and animated by real and unaffected patriotism. Charette, the celebrated Vendean chief, would neither kneel nor allow his eyes to be bound when sacrificed by his republican opponents in 1796. M. de Sombreuil, one of his adherents, had previously done the same, and refusing a bandage for his eyes, said, " I prefer seeing an enemy : " and Perrault, another chief alike bold and collected, declared his only regret in quitting life was to behold Frenchmen transformed to assassins. The name was well bestowed ; for years were occupied in such public assassinations as the world never before witnessed : and if thousands fell in detail, thousands also may be affirmed to have fallen collectively. Thirteen officers of Schill's patriotic regiment were condemned at Weisel, by some of those tribunals which had forsworn mercy ; for, along with the judgment-seat, the thirst for blood seemed to be inherited by its occupiers. These brave men, so far from repining at their fate, bowed to the ladies and the passengers on marching from the prisons to the fatal spot where they were to perish. Confident in the justice of their cause, and feeling that if their contemporaries signed their doom, posterity would record their reputation, all bore the aspect of equanimity—they were almost gay. Being ranged in a line, a party of seventy men was selected to fulfil

their sentence. "Now," cried they, "since we must die, aim well at the head and the heart." They stood uncovered, they gazed stedfastly on the party, and one of their own number gave the word of command; "Advance—present—fire!" The whole fell on the discharge, and twelve instantly expired, but the thirteenth, mortally wounded, only raised his head to reproach the soldiers that, in respect to him, they had proved so unskilful.*

But, alas! that at this very moment virtue should not enjoy the high and exclusive prerogative of intrepidity, that we are refused the gratification of exulting in courage or resignation being reserved as its peculiar privilege: For so wonderful is the constitution of human nature, that the thief of the night, or the atrocious assassin, is enabled to meet his doom with as little, nay with less concern when falling under the vindictive arm of justice, than the innocent victim of a perjured villain, or the soldier who has drawn the fatal lot inscribed with his own destiny. Yet contemplating the visible order and the inscrutable arrangements governing the universe, is not this a medium conducting us to profound reflections on that mysterious dispensing power, which, presenting only terrestrial objects to our gross perceptions, may not confine its equity to the sublunary world?—The records of every coun-

* An officer of high rank in foreign service related this anecdote to the author, having been a spectator of the fact.

try, and of none more than Britain, are full of the fortitude of the most abandoned felons when closing their earthly career. It would seem, indeed, as if the elements of all things were common, that their elaboration into virtue and vice, into courage and pusillanimity, were operated by a certain intellectual process to us unintelligible. Who among the wicked brought to receive the recompence of his demerita, refuses to give the signal for his own exit as vengeance overtakes him?—It is sufficiently known that here a capital sentence is commonly followed by a troubled night, but that the hours immediately preceding its infliction are occupied by profound repose. An unprincipled wretch, who has treacherously sacrificed the man believing him his friend, coolly enquires, on measuring the deadly apparatus with his eye, whether it is so arranged as surely to be sufficient for finishing his existence. An unhappy woman, brought to the same condition, desires to be instructed how to conduct herself, “never having witnessed the manner in which others were thus bereft of life,” and she dies protesting her innocence. Even those who do not venture to extenuate their fault, but feel the penalty by which it is visited as too severe, bear up as boldly in their extremities as if it had been justifiable. A sailor about to suffer for promoting a riot by abstracting fire-arms in London in the year 1817, loudly inveighed against his sentence on the way, while also resolutely exclaiming to the spectators, with seeming self-

consolation, " This is not for cowardice. I am not brought to this for any robbery—I am going to die, but I shall not shrink. If I was at my quarters, I would not be killed in the smoke: I would be in the fire. I have done nothing against my king and country, but fought for them." This man shewed no less determination, though impatiently submitting to his fate, than the bravest sailor of the British navy would testify, if falling in the honourable discharge of duty.

A kind of supernatural fortitude certainly is allotted to some individuals, in the tranquil contemplation of the multiplied destruction awaiting them; even as Damiens is said to have gazed on the cruel means of his extermination with indifference, and to have allowed some pleasantries to escape when amidst his torments. In the year 1789, William Snow having been capitally convicted in England of a felony, was brought forth to punishment, when the rope snapped asunder at the moment of fulfilling his sentence, and the wretched culprit was precipitated to the ground. But the guilty cannot be allowed in this manner to escape their sentence: and during the renewal of the necessary preparations for completing the fiat of the law, strong demonstrations of feeling were betrayed in the groans of the spectators collected to witness the awful scene before them. It was otherwise with the criminal himself, who cried, " Good people, do not be moved! You see I am not moved. I am prepared to die."

He calmly awaited the dissolution of a fellow-sufferer: then baring his neck a second time, he was launched into eternity by means of the same cord which had already done its office to his comrade.*

The conduct of nobles, of statesmen, and of soldiers, is unequivocally courageous; while we reluctantly must allow that of churchmen to be less decided. But almost all of those who die for their religion, seem more firmly rivetted in its principles, and it supports them in the hour of trial as their best consolation. It is only in Christian countries that the inhabitants are known to be familiar with persecution, and to have tortured multitudes to death for their opinions. In later periods, the sufferers seem desirous of imitating the conduct of the earlier proselytes to Christianity,—regarding it the most holy. Yet men whom intolerance has persecuted for other than religious tenets, have shewn as great a superiority of soul, as heroic intrepidity, as ever distinguished the admirable constancy of martyrs. Lucilio Vanini, who was burnt at Toulouse for alleged atheism, in the year 1619, testified no less resolution than appeared in John Huss, or Jerome of Prague, who met a similar destiny for embracing the reformed doctrines, or any of those who perished in Smithfield, or even at the

* *Montague* on the Punishment of Death, p. 282. The case of two soldiers at Chester in 1806, of Moses Macdonald at Greenock in 1812, and many others, illustrate similar accidents.

very commencement of the more general diffusion of Christianity. "Come, let me die willingly as a philosopher," said he: and, amidst excruciating torments, he exclaimed to his persecutors, "The author of your faith is said to have dreaded death; but I fear it not."* Other martyrs, they are truly such, for similar opinions, have maintained the integrity of the principles which they professed, as boldly as those who perish in confidence that the portal of Heaven is opening to receive them. While the divine protection is not withdrawn from mortals, let us beware of compelling that which is unalienable,—the surrender of private sentiment. Laws may prohibit the speech of mankind; but to prohibit thought belongs to a higher Guardian. It is daring, too daring, to assume that our inward affections alone are just. Disturbing opinions is persecution.

The innocent always declare their forgiveness of those who have compassed their death; and even the wicked commonly express their desire to quit the world at peace with all mankind. However steadily they have denied their guilt, it is generally confessed on approaching the gates of eternity, as some atonement to Heaven, when an appeal can be no longer made to man.

To die respectably is the peculiar anxiety of the human race; nay, the mode of destruction some-

* *Schramm de Vita et Scriptis Julii Cæsaris Vanini.*

times seems even more distressing than the event,—for as the last scene of a tragedy is calculated to leave the deepest impression on the spectator, so does the real actor here feel a melancholy interest in his own reputation. When a stone, from the hands of a woman, struck Abimelech's skull in assaulting a tower, "he called hastily unto the young man his armour-bearer, and said unto him, draw thy sword and slay me, that men say not of me '*a woman slew him.*'" The ancients relate, that the Lybians bestowed honourable sepulture on those killed by elephants in hunting,—that they sung certain hymns to their praise, signifying that they were brave men who had exposed themselves to such animals. Hence a Locrian deplored that he had not been the victim of a lion or a leopard, instead of perishing by the bite of a weasel: "it seems he was more affected by the ignominy of the wound than by death itself."*

Alexander the Great, on being seized with a dangerous disease when in quest of fame and victory, was deeply mortified lest "he should die an obscure and ignoble death in his tent."† A Danish Monarch finding inevitable fate approach, the day after having been wounded in battle, ordered himself to be carried out that he might expire

* *Ælian Variæ Historiæ*, lib. xii. cap. 55.—Lib. xiv. cap. 4.

† *Quintus Curtius*, lib. vii. cap. 5: Obscuroque et ignobili morte in tabernaculo suo extingui se querebatur.

amidst his troops ; for he also dreaded dying in his tent obscurely, and thus leaving a veil over his reputation.* But we read in early writings of Siward, an ancient Northumbrian chief, who appears to have been yet more sensible of equivocal celebrity from a private death, when true renown might have been purchased by a public one ; for he cried aloud in the extremity of his distemper, “ O the shame of not having died in so many battles ! clothe me in mail, gird on my sword, and put an axe in my right hand, that, as one of the boldest, I may die as a soldier, for so it becomes a soldier to die.”† His command being obeyed, he expired.

Descending to more modern times, at the battle of Lutzen, where Gustavus I. of Sweden led his army in person, he valorously charged the enemy “ with hand and voice, though thrice shot sustained the fight, doing alike the duty of a soldier and a king, till with the loss of his own life he did restore the victory to his eternal credit ; he died standing, serving the public, for God and his religion.” ‡

Men who have lived in dignity, and who have been always ardent for honour and glory, who have braved all peril, and rejoice as true patriots in their country’s weal, cannot endure the slightest imputa-

* *Saxo-Grammaticus Danorum Historiæ*, lib. iii. p. 23.

† *Brompton Chronicon*. ap: Twysden *Historiæ Anglicanæ Scriptores* x. col. 946.

‡ *Monro, Expedition of the Scotch Regiment, Part ii. p. 167.*

tion on the respectability of their dying moments. They are solicitous regarding posthumous fame: and if, having been so willing to meet the most illustrious fate, where duty called them amidst the shafts of mortality, they still feel earnest whenever the hour arrives, that they shall fall with that renown which they have endeavoured to preserve.

From some peculiar notions entertained in common with more distinguished persons, even those in private life, when labouring under a mortal disease, have testified their wishes to assume what they deemed a reputable condition to leave the world. The father of Vanini, like the Emperor Vespasian, quitted his bed to die standing.*

How many different passions, therefore, are evolved just at that moment when all are about to cease for ever!—terror, shame, courage, pride, meekness, and humility. But the sense of dishonour seems ever the most predominant; and from this it is that men desire the most reputable fate to close their existence; that females, from innate modesty, are anxious to be delicately treated even in death. Marie Antoniette, struggling for the preservation of life with her persecutors, appealed to the mothers who listened to her trial, whether some of the basest charges could in nature be true. Queen Anne Boleyn is said to have composed her

* *Vanini Amphitheatrum Providentiæ Æternæ, Exercitatio* xxvii. p. 158.

robe when reclining on the block, that her body might fall decently. The heroine Charlotte Corday was animated by a similar care ; and Madame Elbée, the wife of a Vendean chief, and her friend Madame Maurin, who had afforded her an asylum, being led forth to perish, both advanced resolutely, but demanding, as their sole request, that when bereft of life their bodies might not be abandoned to the insults of the soldiery.* So tender is the female mind of reputation.

It is from anxiety to die respectably that the disgrace of an ignominious fate appears intolerable to those who are doomed to suffer, whence they implore a commutation, not of the extent but of the mode of their punishment. Major André besought his barbarous captors, that the honourable death allotted for soldiers might be permitted to him. Marshal Biron opened his breast to the military guarding the gate of his prison, requesting a volley from their hands, and exclaiming, "How unfortunate to die so miserably, and in such a shameful way !" Noble criminals convicted of ordinary crimes have still insisted that they might perish in the way appropriated for nobles.† Ancient history re-

* *Beauchamps* Histoire de la Guerre de la Vendée, tom. ii. p. 183.

† *Bacon*, Essays, § 39: "I remember in the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's time of England, an Irish rebel condemned, put up a petition to the deputy that he might be hanged in a withe, and not in a halter, because it had been so used with for-

lates, that the Syrian priests having predicted the suicide of the Emperor Heliogabalus, he prepared golden swords and silken ropes in case he might be compelled to destroy himself; but they proved false prophets, for he was assassinated by the military, and his body exposed to indignity.* Caracalla was offended that Papinian, the celebrated lawyer, had not been decapitated by a sword instead of an axe, either because the latter was unsuitable to his rank, or because it would have been the greater indignity.† Florus inveighs against the Illyrians for having beheaded the Roman ambassadors with an axe, not a sword, and considers their fate still more ignominious because a woman had commanded it.‡ Neither is this a sentiment peculiar to polished nations; for it appears along with the earlier pride or dignity arising from the social state. Nothing was so distressing to a valiant Aurucanian chief after an unsuccessful struggle for the liberties of his country, as at last to behold the ignominious fate prepared for him by the cruel Spaniards. He hurled the executioner from the

mer rebels." Some of the incendiaries of the French revolution were mortified at being clothed in the red shirt when the guillotine fell to their turn.

* *Ælius Lampridius*, Antoninus Heliogabalus, cap. 33.

† *Dio*, lib. lxxvii. § 4. tom. ii. p. 1240. *Ælius Spartianus*, Antoninus Caracallus, cap. 4: In conspectu ejus Papinianus securi percussus est, et a militibus occisus: quo facto percussori dixit, Gladio te insequi oportuit meum jussum.

‡ *Florus*, lib. ii. cap. 5: Regnante Teuta muliere.

scaffold, indignantly exclaiming, "Is there no sword, and some less unworthy hand to be found, to put to death a man like myself?"*

Thus have soldiers desired to die the death of the brave; and although they felt no terrors, they have been stung with indignation when doomed to a dishonourable destiny. They have deplored their disappointment of an illustrious close to an illustrious career, by falling in the field of glory, to be awakened by the trumpet of fame, and dwell in the remembrance of the world.

Many clothe themselves in black as the hour of mortality approaches, because it is mourning for the dead, and they believe it the most suitable to their condition; but many also endeavour to attire themselves in their best apparel even when bent on private suicide, and having no expectation of public exposure. When arrayed in white, it seems to have been assumed as an emblem of innocence. The unhappy suicides, Sophia and Henrietta de St Marie, had attired themselves in white apparel, which was bound around with ribbands, to preserve their lifeless bodies from the ruffling of the winds. The late Queen of France is said by some to have changed her mourning for a white robe, in the few remaining hours that she was spared by her persecutors after announcing her fate. Madame Roland, another victim, clothed herself in white on the morning that

* *Molina, History of Chili*, vol. ii. p. 193.

she was to suffer ; her long black tresses descending to her girdle. Madame Desmoulins, about the same time condemned because a letter had been addressed to her which it was proved she had never received, went with the utmost tranquillity, arrayed in white, to punishment, amidst murmurs of commiseration among the multitude ; " Ah, how beautiful she is ! how mild are her looks ! what a pity she should die ! " * But the death of Madame Roland was great. " You think me worthy to share the lot of those illustrious men you have assassinated," she cried to the sanguinary tribunal, thirsting for destruction ; " I shall try to bear the same courage in my breast that they have shewn on the scaffold." She comforted a companion in misfortune occupying the fatal car along with her ; and by her cheerfulness and consolation, even brought a smile to his lips. †

The innocent bestow the same, or even greater, care on their dress and appearance, when fate becomes inevitable, as on ordinary occasions, thereby denoting remarkable mental composure. When Rome was sacked by the Gauls, the aged, unmoved by danger, retired to their houses. Such as had filled magisterial offices, preferred dying in the garb emblematic of their former honours, and thus resting

* *Les Dernier Momens de Plus Illustres Personnages Français*, p. 209.

† *Riouffe Memoires D'un Detenu*, p. 48.

on ivory seats in the vestibule awaited the approach of the enemy.* But this is a custom which ascends to remote antiquity, and has come down to the present time. On the day that Socrates was appointed to swallow poison, Apollodorus carried him a cloak and tunic beautifully wove of fine wool, in which it would be creditable for him to die.† Mary Queen of Scotland attired herself as if it had been for a festival, and Charles I. wore the insignia of the most distinguished order of the kingdom, when falling under the treasons of his rebellious subjects.

Not very long ago it was remarked by the survivors of a deplorable catastrophe, that many of the crew of a ship of war who had laboured with the utmost alacrity during days of cruel suspense, at length attired themselves in their best apparel, when assured that they must be infallibly entombed in the ocean.‡

The vicious are actuated no less than the virtuous sufferer under the hands of mankind, by a kind of pride that their appearance shall leave an impression on the mind of the spectators: and it is only from having been deemed unworthy of notice, or from want of observation, if unrecorded in earlier

* *Diogenes Laertius* in vita Socratis. *Ælian Variæ Historiæ*, lib. i. cap. 16.

† *Livy*, lib. v. cap. 4.

‡ *Inglefield*, Narrative of the loss of the Centaur, p. 12.

British history, along with testimonies of their courage. A century ago it was remarked, that malefactors carried through the streets of London were "dressed in their best clothes, with white gloves, and nosebags if it were the season; and that they had been observed to put their gloves into their pockets on the way, lest they might be injured by the rain, and made unfit to appear at Tyburn."^{*} Their countenance neither was pale, nor betrayed the conflict of internal sensations; nor, unless for their apparel, together with bearing the type of their punishment, were they distinguished by any thing from the rest of the multitude. A century earlier, a traitorous priest, as he was then called, but who only refused an oath of allegiance, arrayed himself in a perfectly new habit of the order of the Benedictines, to which he belonged, as appropriate to the respectability of the character he wished to maintain in his dying moments.[†] In 1716, an English clergyman, who had joined the insurgents, suffered in his canonical habit: and Viscount Kenmure, noted for attachment to the exiled dynasty, regretted on the like occasion that the precipitation of his fate had prevented him from providing black apparel, as of greater decency than that in which he appeared.

^{*} *Murali*, Letters, p. 42, 43.

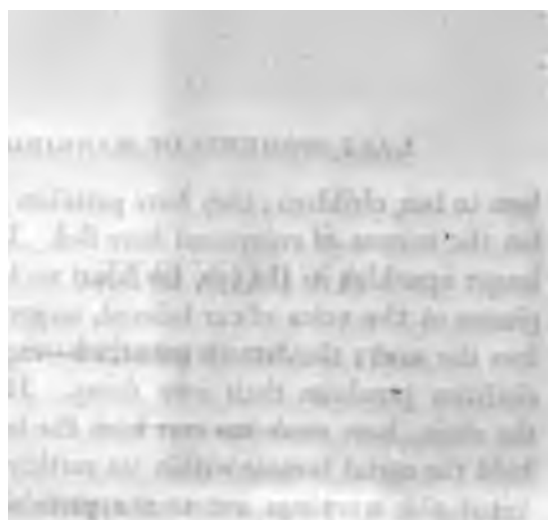
[†] *Harleian Miscellany*, vol. iii. p. 44: Arraignment of Robert Drewrie, 1607.

Thus do the multifarious passions gifted along with birth determine human conduct throughout the mutabilities of life, and testify their influence even at the hour of dissolution. But in this final scene, perhaps, is the genuine interior more unreservedly disclosed than at any preceding epoch; for dissimulation perturbs conscience, while candour may purchase peace. The secret springs uncovered, now display their real action: Yet new sensations are also then aroused; for every new condition is calculated to generate in some diversified form the endless varieties constituting the mental system. Solitude respecting a future world, awakens in those who scarcely bent a serious thought to the circumstances of that wherein they dwelt; and men who seemed regardless of present reputation, shew an anxious concern for posthumous fame. Thence, too, is that profound devotion of the hitherto profane, or that preternatural courage of the feeble in their latest moments; thence come the triumphs of virtuous innocence, and the remorse of abandoned guilt. But, alas! how many who never knew to count on the value of their inestimable possession, are now driven to distraction and despair when it must be violently reft from them, and themselves aggravate their hopeless misery!

That life has been given for pleasure is true, because the grand aim of nature is pleasure; nor can a benignant Deity do otherwise than apportion a certain share of felicity to his chosen creatures for an ap-

pointed time. But life is necessarily transient ; for animated matter must be decomposed and perish : nay, the invasion of evil is apparently annexed to the conditions of its subsistence along with the perception of good. Although progressive increment of the nascent germ receiving vitality seemingly becomes mature, some further stage will bring inevitable destruction to waste its organic frame. Infinity is a character pertaining to time and space alone. The fragments of substance, the portions of incident wherewith they are replete, are obliterating by incessant changes, or renewing in modifications of which the elements have yet escaped the reach of human recognition. Night is drawing her sable curtain around the lucent spheres : universal deperdition consumes the visible world, the dark gulf of eternity yawns insatiable for the warm flood of life, ever rolling into its fathomless abysses. We have felt a racking torment : yet do the perishable materials of our frail and delicate mould cease to attract our notice. We forget that the rocks and the stones, which our remotest ancestry have seen, crumble down before us, and are scattered by the winds ; that the floweret of summer has faded, that the pride of the forest has fallen. We linger after life as if a heavenly dispensation had granted its ceaseless tenure ; we shrink from the consciousness of mortality, and shudder at the menaces of death, though promising release from pain, and the close of sorrow. Nature provided pleasure as the most exquisite

boon to her children ; they have partaken its sweets, but the means of enjoyment have fled. Delight no longer sparkles in the eye, the heart no longer palpitates at the voice of our beloved, no genial ardour fires the soul ; the flame is quenched—expiring sensibilities proclaim their own decay. How slight the chain, how weak has ever been the bond which held the aërial inmate within its earthly mansion ! intelligible warnings announce approaching flight ; they speak of endless separation—perchance another state. Dire forebodings fill the breast ; the spirit flutters. But resignation hastens to make the timid tranquil : patience pacifies the perturbation of the bold ; and then do they hail the next as an auspicious moment, which shall set the incorporeal portion free. “O man, what is your life ! it is even as a vapour, which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.”



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APPENDIX.

NOTES AND CORRECTIONS.

Vol. I. p. 6. In regard to the perils of human existence, various observers have drawn different conclusions ; for it is likely that the materials whereon definite opinions may be founded are not sufficiently explicit. Many important remarks are concentrated in *Peuchet Statistique Elementaire de la France*, p. 242, 243.

Vol. I. p. 18. It is not improbable that profound erudition, combined with acute observation and a more accurate knowledge than now subsists of human nature, may restrict the elements of the passions to very few principles. Possibly like animal instincts, properly so called, their radical agents are less numerous than is deduced from their aspect and consequences. In all things, perhaps, the greatness of the artist is proved by the simplicity of the work.

Vol. I. p. 43. If there be any authentic instances recorded of the regular accusation of animals, probably it may have been to involve their own-

ers in a question of indemnification of injury; or to obtain forfeiture, in the same way as when death comes by means of a living creature in England it is confiscated to the king. This has been repeatedly exemplified; nay, the whole or part of an inanimate object has been forfeited; and lawyers have gravely debated, what portion of a mine shall be liable for a man who is crushed to death by the earth falling in; or if one tumble into a mill-pond, and is sucked under the wheel, whether the whole mill or only the wheel shall be forfeited. It has been affirmed, that one of the judges of the revolutionary tribunal in Paris, proposed in open court to put on trial the dog of an invalid named St Prix, because he bit the Jacobins, and daily went to howl on the spot where his master had been executed; and it was his opinion that he should be carried to the foot of the scaffold, and be there put to death by the public executioner. *Prudhomme* Dictionnaire, tom. i. Reflexions Preliminaires, p. lv.

Vol. I. p. 45. Instances of the vengeance of women against their injurers seem the more remarkable, because they have greater difficulty to accomplish it. About 60 years ago it is said, that the indiscretion of some malevolent person led him to slander the reputation of a lady, dwelling in a city in the north of Britain, to her husband; she felt the wound so deep, that, clothing herself in male attire, she sent for the offender to a tavern, where,

offering one of two pistols which was declined, she immediately shot him through the head, and then made her escape to Holland.

Vol. I. p. 58. Among the Karatschai, or Black Circassians, a similar principle subsists as with the American Indians: "When one man has killed another, the relatives of the latter, by all means, strive to avenge his blood by the death of the murderer; and thus, according to their notions, to give rest to his and their own souls." *Klaproth, Travels in the Caucasus and Georgia*, p. 289.

Vol. I. p. 58. The duty of vengeance is held imperative among the ruder tribes of North American Indians. "A young Chactaw having done something deserving reproof, he was therefore chid by his mother; this he took so ill as, in the fury of his shame, to resolve his own death, which he effected with a gun. His sister, as his nearest relative, thought herself bound to avenge his death; and knowing the circumstance, told her mother she had caused her brother's death, and must pay for his life. The old woman resigned herself to her fate, and died by the hands of her daughter, who shot her with a gun which she had provided for the catastrophe." *Romans, Natural History of Florida*, p. 88.

Vol. I. p. 59. *Duel*. It was computed that, from the accession of Henry IV. in 1588 to the year

1607, no fewer than 4000 gentlemen had been killed in duels in France, which is probably nearer the truth than St Foix's estimate. Note: *Sully Memoires*, tom. iv. p. 466.—*Brantome sur les Duels*, Œuvres, tom. viii. says, he saw a representation on tapestry of the duel referred to by Le Laboureur, between Le Gris and Carrange, and was present when the figures were explained to Charles IX.—*Richelieu Memoires*, tom. ii. p. 251, relates, that in the year 1718, a very remarkable duel, excited by jealousy, was fought in the Bois de Boulogne by Madame de Neale and Madame de Polignac, ladies of high rank. The combatants were armed with pistols, and the former fell by a wound, though not a mortal one, from the fire of her triumphant adversary, who had summoned her to the field.

Vol. I. p. 120, 178. Some affectionate persons have shewn themselves very earnest to preserve relics of those to whom they were deeply attached. When the Count de Coconas was beheaded in 1574 for a conspiracy, the Duchess de Nevers carried off his head secretly in the night from a post whereon it had been exposed in the Place de Greve in Paris; and having had it embalmed, kept it ever after in a cabinet in her bed-chamber. *Roy de Gomberville*, *Memoires de M. le Duc de Nevers*, tom. i. p. 75. During the later convulsions of France, it moves our horror, indignation, and pity alike, to hear one relate, "I saw a woman follow the object of her most tender affections to the scaffold, and accom-

pany his remains to the spot of sepulture. There she flattered the cupidity of the sexton, saying, "You shall have 100 Louis for the head I seek—the eyes were blue, and the hair was fair." The man pledged himself, he performed his promise, and the unhappy female came to receive the precious deposit in the finest handkerchief. But nature was unable to support the violence of her emotions; she sunk at the corner of the street St Florentin, and her secret burden was exposed to the view of the terrified passengers." *Nougaret sur les Prisons*, tom. iii. p. 69.

Vol. I. p. 139. *Nicephorus Historia*, p. 10, observes, that the Emperor Heraclius, in violation of the laws of the Romans, married Martina, the daughter of his sister Mary.

Burckhardt, *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land*, p. 201, maintains, that the religion of the Druses permits them to take their sisters in marriage.

Unequal Marriages are unknown throughout Circassia, from the pride of birth: *Klaproth*, *Travels*, p. 319. In Italy and Sicily they are attended with the greatest inconvenience, and even with danger and ignominy to the parties: *Piozzi*, *Journey*, vol. ii. p. 47, 51.

The marriage of persons of different religious tenets has been repeatedly opposed with much vehemence. A short tract on the subject was published in the former century, more specially addressed to Quakers, p. 30, where the author does not hesitate

to ascribe the submersion of the world by the flood to the divine indignation against such alliances, p. 8. *Moses West*, Treatise concerning Marriage, wherein the unlawfulness of mixt marriages is laid open from the Scripture of Truth, London, 1707, in 12mo.

Vol. I. p. 154. Repeated instances occurred of relations willingly perishing for each other, during the enormities of the French revolution. It appears, in respect to General Loizerolles, that his son Francis, a young man of 22, was accused of being concerned in a conspiracy in the prisons. The former came to the bar of the revolutionary tribunal along with 25 unfortunates, where the clerk, to fit the indictment to the age and name of the prisoner, erased the word Francis and the cyphers 22, substituting John as his name and 61 for his age. Accordingly, he suffered instead of his son. The fact being explained to the National Convention some months after in the year 1795, his confiscated property was ordered to be restored to his widow and his son Francis, who thus escaped so narrowly.

Vol. I. p. 211. The most favourable picture of the hospitality of the Arabs of Syria and Palestine, and in more remote regions, is presented by *Burckhardt*, Travels, p. 294, 295, 353, 383, 384, 484: A traveller has no occasion to provide himself with money; for the first person who, describing him from afar, exclaims, "there comes my

guest!" claims the right of entertaining him. In some parts of Syria and Palestine, there are public taverns supported by the inhabitants, where all persons of respectable appearance are entertained, and their horses or camels fed. Hospitality is esteemed the highest virtue; and "when a stranger enters a town, the people almost come to blows with one another in their eagerness to have him for a guest." At Kerek "their love of entertaining strangers is carried to such a length, that not long ago when a Christian silversmith came from Jerusalem to work for the ladies, and who, being an industrious man, seldom stirred out of his shop, was on the point of departure after a two months residence, each of the principal inhabitants sent him a lamb, saying, that it was not just he should lose his due, though he did not chuse to come and dine with them." No consideration will induce a Druse to give up a person who has put himself under his protection. All persons are in perfect safety from the moment they enter the Emir's territory on Mount Libanus, p. 203. In the *Expedition to Dongola and Sennaar* in 1820, is given a more singular instance of hospitality, p. 120.

Vol. I. p. 223. The hospital founded by Louis IX. in the year 1254, afforded an asylum to 420 persons deprived of sight, in the year 1805.

Vol. I. p. 233. Louis XIV. abandoned by his mistress, his natural son, and his confessor. *Richelieu*, Memoires, tom. i. p. 313, 314.

Vol. I. p. 265. *Labat Voyages en Espagne et en Italie*, tom. iii. p. 46, 47, 48. observes of the monsters of Italy, "when the assassins use only the edge of a knife, there are surgeons sufficiently skilful to cure the wounds, so that the scar remains scarcely perceptible. But the face is disfigured in a horrible manner from wounds by the coin called *Giulio rotalo*, for round elevated cicatrices rise to the thickness of a quill, which are never obliterated. "Why is the metal of this coin, which is pure silver, so very noxious?"

Vol. I. p. 268. The punishment of death was restricted by the French republic to decapitation by the guillotine; and this seems to have satisfied the fiercest republicans. It is even said that the executioner at Lyons was capitally convicted for not having taken the necessary precaution to spare the sufferings of a person named Châlier, striking him four or five times on the neck with the axe; and that he was executed by his brother, who followed the same vocation in another department. *Prudhomme Dictionnaire* voce *RIPET*. Those wretches attained a horrible kind of dexterity; and on one occasion the murderous instrument was known to sever twelve heads in thirteen minutes: *Beauchamps Guerre de la Vendée*, tom. i. p. 83. Promptitude in dispatching the victims at length came to be the subject of calculation.

Vol. I. p. 293. Though the inhabitants of Bri-

tain be safe from public rapacity in their own opinion, they would scarcely call their treatment lenient if meeting in foreign countries what they every day experience at home. By what name would they denominate the fine which every one must submit to for indulging his taste, promoting his convenience, or even for partaking of the exercise necessary for his health? It seems harsh to say that a portion of that testimony of regard which is bequeathed by a beloved friend shall be confiscated on its way to our possession—that if we obtain an Italian or an Indian silken scarf, from affection of the living, it shall be wrested from us by force, and burnt before our face—that we shall be punished for having it in our possession. It sounds harsh, that one who hires a horse or a chaise to make an excursion for the benefit of his health, shall be fined exactly in proportion to the space traversed on the high road; that if he sits on a cushion in his own carriage, he is fined somewhat more than if he sat on a deal board; though, in respect to time or distance, he may sit as long as he pleases without incurring any additional penalty. Are we so much inured to these things, that we lose sight of their proper character?

Vol. I. p. 308. It is not improbable that this eastern tradition may be traced to the same source as the golden feast offered by the wife of Pythis, a Grecian potentate contemporary with Xerxes. A mine of gold having been discovered in his territories, all other industrious pursuits were neglected, from hopes of immediately accumulating riches.

But the wife of Pythis, to show the pernicious consequences, directed the different kinds of food for which she knew her husband's greatest partiality to be imitated and served up in gold : and when he complained of having nothing to satisfy his hunger, she told him that the people having abandoned agriculture, only gold was to be obtained. By this seasonable warning, he discovered the benefit of returning to the cultivation of the soil. *Plutarch* de Virtutibus Mulierum ; in fine.

Vol. I. p. 350. *Imposture*. In the year 1697, a native of the island of St Kilda, the total population of which did not exceed 180 souls, gained such an ascendancy over the inhabitants, by pretending a mission from St John the Baptist, and practising various delusions, that they durst refuse him nothing. *Martin*, Voyage to St Kilda ; in fine.

Vol. I. p. 371. " The wife of the Seigneur de Montsoreau had made an assignation with Bussi d'Amboise, on Friday the sixteenth of August 1579, that her husband might assassinate him. Being of invincible courage, he defended himself bravely against ten or twelve armed men, shewing that fear, as he often said, had no place in his breast. But he was dissolute, and dreaded God little, which brought about his tragedy at the age of 30, having run only half his career, as commonly befalls such men." *L'Etoile Journal*, tom. i. p. 44.

Vol. II. p. 107. *French Prisons*. It appears that the prisoners in the various places of confinement in Paris had increased to 6863 on the second of April 1794, from the number of 1794 in September 1792. But at the end of that month, notwithstanding the constant destruction, they augmented to 7840. During June and July incredible havoc continued. There were daily condemnations, sometimes of 50 or 60 individuals at a time, and in the first fortnight of the latter month 489 persons suffered death: one of the articles of accusation against the sanguinary public prosecutor Fouquier Tinville himself, was his having obtained the conviction of from 60 to 80 unhappy beings in four hours.

Vol. II. p. 237. The following complicated biography may serve as a specimen of a style not uncommon in England during the middle of the seventeenth century.

“ 23. The honourable Mr Edward Sackville, (the Earle of Dorset's son) a person of great hopes, that, (having overcome those rosie nets, the flattering vanities of youth and greatness strewed in his way) distinguished himself not by birth (his mother's labour not his) from the common throng, but worth: (a jewel come into the world with its own light and glory) and studies which cutting the untrod Alps of knowledge, with the vinegar only of an eager and smart spirit to all that he was born to know, most barbarously [slain] between Oxford and

Abington, aiming not at the conquest of any faction, but all errors, as Aristotle went over the world, while Alexander did so over a part of it." *Lloyd, Memoirs*, p. 689.

An author about the same period complains, besides certain words which he specifies, of a thousand phrases so unnatural, "that they cause a loathing in a curious and judicious eye." Among those named are, adpugne, algale, adstupiate, brochity, extorque, ebriolate, contrast, imporcate, fraxate, glabretal, lurcate, mephitic, obsalutate, orbation, plumative, prodigity, subgrund, vitulate.—*Vindex Anglicus*, or the Perfections of the English Language, defended and asserted, 1644. Of 49 quoted, only three are now in use.

Vol. II. p. 246. *Gerberon Le Robe sans Couture*. The author affirms, that this precious relic was preserved in an ancient monastery at Argenteuil, near Paris, at the date of his publication in 1677. Describing its form, its substance, and colour, he expresses his opinion that it was the work of the Virgin Mary herself; that it was wore until the period of the crucifixion; accidentally preserved, and carried from Jaffa to Jerusalem in the year 594: that the Empress Irene gave it to Charlemagne in the year 800, and having passed to the monastery at Argenteuil, it was discovered in a secret place by a divine revelation to one of the nuns in 1156. It had been kept there ever after, and revered by many crowned heads. From the

miraculous cures operated by its touch, or even by praying before it, no doubt could be entertained of its identity. Many had been healed of palsy, dropsy, or blindness, and a child carried before it was actually restored to life, as the author declares he personally ascertained.

Curtus de Clavis Dominicis, enters on an elaborate discussion regarding the length and figure of the nails of the cross, wherein he appeals, very confidently, to the visions of St Brigit, and illustrates his own sentiments by engravings, cap. 10. He endeavours, but less successfully than the former, to trace the history of the whole, cap. 7.

Vol. II. p. 337. Those who can refuse commendation, are endowed with a quality rarely dispensed. The late Earl of Orford, Horatio Walpole, declined the dedication of a book to him devised in complimentary terms, saying, "Next to being ashamed of having good qualities bestowed upon me to which I should have no title, it would hurt me to be praised for my erudition, which is most superficial, and for my trifling writings, all of which turn on most trifling subjects. They amused me while writing them, may have amused a few persons, but have nothing solid enough to preserve them from being forgotten with other things of as light a nature." *The Sexagenarian*, or Memoirs of a Literary Life, vol. i. p. 269.



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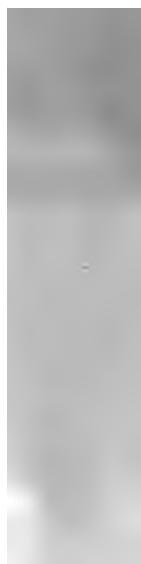
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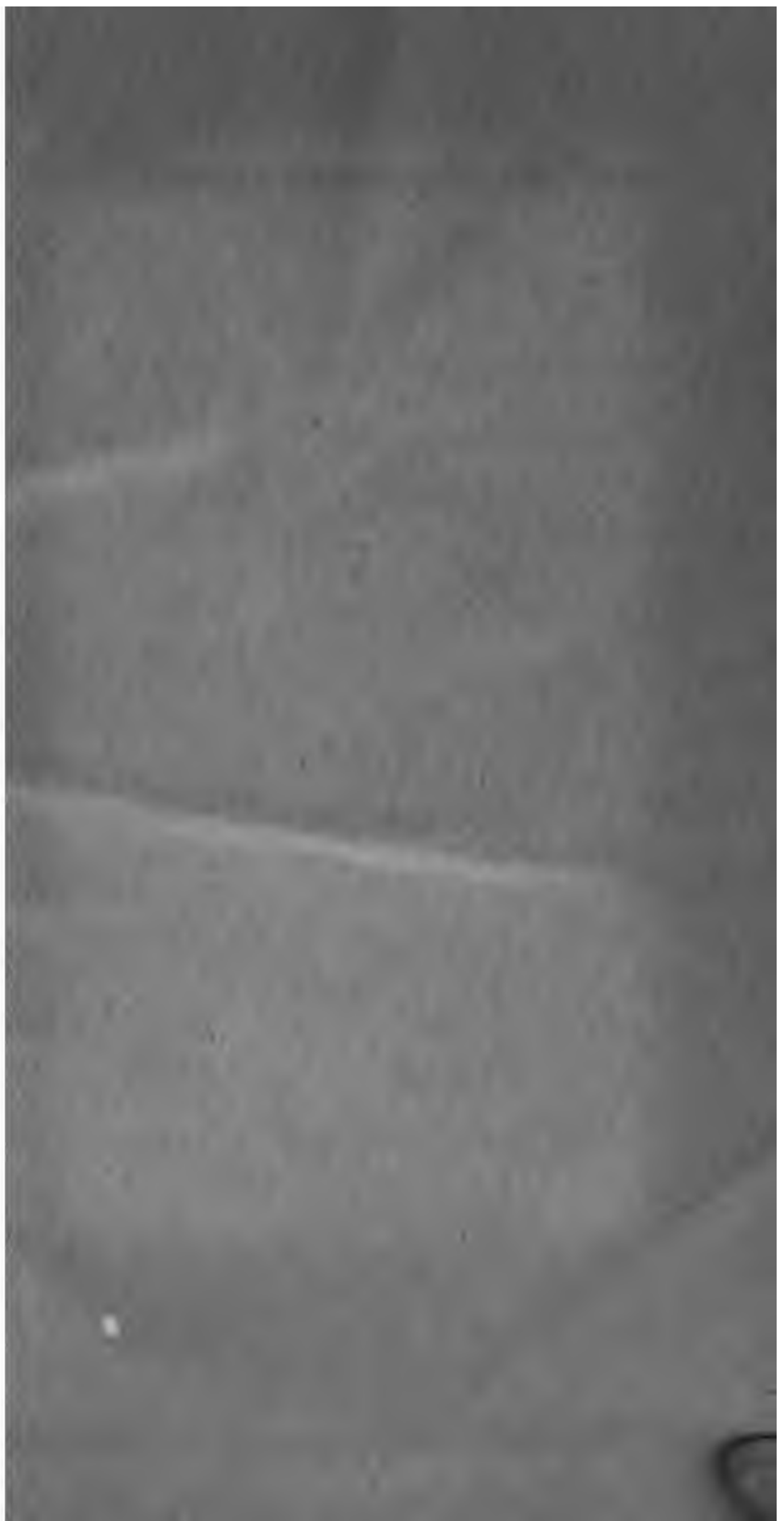
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